

# Remembering Family, Analyzing Home: Oral History and the Family

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When we remember our families and the homes that we lived in, reminisce about our childhood obsession with the wireless, or recount the harrowing journey that took us to a new land where there were better opportunities, we do much more than entertain audiences and memorialize people and places. We connect ourselves to a recognizable past that helps us locate and understand our identities, our relationships with others, and our place in the world. For most of us, “the familial and intimate past” revealed in individual and family memories “matters most.” We favour the personal because, as Roy Rosenzweig and David Thelen declare, we “feel at home with that past: [we] live with it, interpret it and reinterpret it; [we] use it to define [ourselves], [our] place in [our] families, and [our] families’ place in the world.”<sup>1</sup> To this end, families and homes are archives where the search for belonging begins.<sup>2</sup> They are repositories of emotion and feeling, dwelling places for memories, physical sites where objects are stored, and foundations for identities and experiences.<sup>3</sup> When we analyze what inhabits and is sustained by these archives, we reflect on sources that are among the most intimate available to us for studying the history of families.

As the contributors to this special issue demonstrate, however, studying remembered pasts is neither direct nor uncomplicated. There are neither collection numbers, nor archivists, nor neat boxes to contain our recollections. By their nature, memories are fluid and often fleeting. Although a familiar smell, a tattered photograph, or a treasured heirloom may prompt them, memories remain indivisible from the subjectivity and locality of the memory maker. They are constantly lost and forgotten, buried by death and time. When we share memories, say them out loud and let them loose in the world, our audiences shape them as

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<sup>1</sup> Roy Rosenzweig and David Thelen, *The Presence of the Past: Popular Uses of History in American Life* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), 12.

<sup>2</sup> This line of reasoning is drawn from the work done by Antoinette Burton. See Burton, *Dwelling in the Archive: Women Writing Home, Home, and History in Late Colonial India* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003); Burton, ed., *Archive Stories: Facts, Fictions, and the Writing of History* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005). For further discussion on the archive and its relationship to family history see Indrani Chatterjee, *Unfamiliar Relations: Family and History in South Asia* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2004).

<sup>3</sup> While some may consider these archival sites as unconventional, we believe that they are rich and textured spaces that are worthy of historical enquiry. For a discussion about the limits of the archive see, for instance, Jacques Derrida, *Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression*, trans. Eric Prenowitz (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996).

well. We also keep secrets and remain silent. Myths, dreams, and gossip alter the tales we tell.<sup>4</sup> Family stories tend, therefore, to be quite elusive and even contested, making it difficult for us to fully understand where we have come from, who we are now, and where we are going. Nonetheless, our memories, no matter their structure and inspiration, “make possible a sense of belonging, fragile as that might be.”<sup>5</sup> Certainly, it is this endless negotiation, and the intricate mixture of constancy and change, which makes families and their stories fascinating ground for historical analysis.

*Remembering Family, Analyzing Home* originated in a desire to explore how the uneven “tapestry” of memory sustains families. In doing so, we were drawn to the scholarship of Alessandro Portelli, who reminds us that “[oral] sources tell us not just what people did, but what they wanted to do, what they believed they were doing, and what they now think they did.”<sup>6</sup> Our conversation began during a panel at the 2008 meeting of the Canadian Historical Association in Vancouver, British Columbia. Here Alexander Freund’s study of the recollections of three generations of German-Canadian women, Katrina Srigley’s analysis of one family’s memories of the Great Depression, and Stacey Zembrzycki’s consideration of the methodological challenges of “personalized scholarship” allowed us to examine how people construct and deploy memories and uncover the fascinating connections that they make between the past and the present. This discussion did not, however, answer specific questions about families, their histories, or their memories. In fact, it was only after the conference was behind us that we fully appreciated the degree to which we were talking about families as sites of identity, experience, and memory making.

This special issue picks up this conversation by exploring two inter-related themes: families as sites of remembering and families as sources of identity and experience. The scholars included in this special issue approach these themes in different and unique ways. Like the earliest historians of the family, some employ interdisciplinary methodologies, using anthropological approaches to draw out intergenerational and kinships connections or asking sociological questions about

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<sup>4</sup> See Annette Kuhn, *Family Secrets: Acts of Memory and Imagination* (London: Verso, 1995); Luisa Passerini, *Fascism in Popular Memory: The Cultural Experiences of the Turin Working-Class*, trans. Robert Lumley and Jude Bloomfield (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987); Raphael Samuel and Paul Thompson, *The Myths We Live By* (London: Routledge, 1990); Luise White, *Speaking with Vampires: Rumor and History in Colonial Africa* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000); Daniel Bertaux and Paul Thompson, eds., *Between Generations: Family Models, Myths, and Memories* (London: Transaction Publishers, 1993).

<sup>5</sup> Kuhn, *Family Secrets*, 7.

<sup>6</sup> We build here on Tamara K. Hareven’s use of “tapestry” to reflect the multi-layered nature of history. See Hareven, “What Difference Does it Make?” *Social Science History* 20, 3 (Fall 1996), 317-344; Alessandro Portelli, *The Death of Luigi Trastulli and Other Stories: Form and Meaning in Oral History* (Albany, New York: State University of New York Press, 1991), 50.

self-identity and parent-child relationships. Several of the articles draw multi-media and the public domain into the conversation: they explore the aural soundscapes of family through remembered sounds of WWII England and *murmur* sites placed throughout Toronto's Kensington Market. They perform family in Montreal's Monument National Theatre and journey through the Internet to piece together a mother's life. Others build on a long tradition of scholarship in family history, a desire to uncover the multiple historical meanings of family across time and place and among different historical actors. These scholars complicate our understanding of families by considering questions of experience, identity, and power, and examining the role of the scholar in the construction of the past. The end result is an interdisciplinary and transnational collection about how we remember families in Australia, Canada, the United Kingdom, and the United States, which speaks to the shifting memories, deep meanings, and treasured artifacts that are at the heart of these intimate archival spaces.

### Getting "Inside" Families

When historians began to study families more than forty years ago, they were inspired, like others interested in "new social history" approaches to the past, by the democratic possibilities of a subject that brought the private sphere, sentiment and emotion, women and children, and the lives of "ordinary people" into scholarly focus.<sup>7</sup> They built their scholarship on the work of historical demographers, particularly those in France working within the *Annales* School, who had reconstructed families through marriage, death, and baptismal data in parish records in the 1950s, and interdisciplinary approaches to families evident in the fields of anthropology, sociology, economics, and psychology.<sup>8</sup> Since the 1960s, the history of families has developed organically. Historians of women and the working class breathed life into the worlds that demographers had

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<sup>7</sup> On the development of the "new social history" see Hareven, "What Difference Does It Make?" 317-344; James Opp and John C. Walsh, "Introduction," in *Home, Work, and Play: Situating Canadian Social History, 1840-1980*, eds. Opp and Walsh (Don Mills, Ontario: Oxford University Press, 2006), vii-vix. The ethnographic fieldwork conducted by sociologists in the Chicago School of Sociology during the 1920s and 1930s is also worth noting here. See, for instance, Robert Park, Ernest Burgess, Roderic McKenzie, *The City* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1925).

<sup>8</sup> For more on historical demography and early interdisciplinary approaches, see Tamara Hareven, "The History of the Family and the Complexity of Social Change," *American Historical Review* 96, 1 (1991), 97-100; Robert Wheaton, "Observations on the Development of Kinship History, 1942-1985," *Journal of Family History* 12 (1987), 285-302. The earliest scholars in the field include, but are certainly not limited to, Philippe Ariès, *L'Enfant et la vie familiale sous l'ancien régime* (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1960); Pierre Goubert, "Une richesse historique en cour d'exploitation: Les Registres paroissiaux," *Annales: E.S.C.* 9 (1954), 83-93; Louis Henry, "Une richesse démographique en fiche: Les Registres paroissiaux," *Population* 8 (1953), 281-290.

reconstructed and fundamentally altered our understanding of what family meant to different historical actors.<sup>9</sup> In the 1990s, gender historians, along with others interested in poststructuralist critiques of power, and its operation in cultural discourses and subjectivities, deconstructed the family and redefined it as an intricate social and cultural construct that could not be understood through simple binary notions like public and private.<sup>10</sup> In doing so, these scholars revealed the elaborate connections that constitute families: race, class, sexuality, religion, ethnicity, age, gender, place, and state intrusions intersect in interesting ways to give us a contested and complex notion of families.<sup>11</sup> Scholarship on the history

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<sup>9</sup> The questions and politics of socialist feminists influenced scholarship in the Canadian context earlier than in Britain and the United States. On this topic see, Roberta Hamilton and Michele Barret, *The Politics of Diversity: Feminism, Marxism and Nationalism* (Montreal: Book Center, 1986). For examples of scholarship in women's and working-class history see Marjorie Cohen, *Women's Work, Markets, and Economic Development in Nineteenth-Century Ontario* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988); Carol Dyhouse, *Feminism and the Family in England, 1880-1939* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1989); Patricia Grimshaw, Chris McConville and Ellen McEwen, eds., *Families in Colonial Australia* (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1985); Linda Gordon, *Heroes of Their Own Lives: The Politics and History of Family Violence* (Chicago: Illinois University Press, 1988); Peggy Koopman-Boyden, ed., *Families in New Zealand Society* (Wellington, NZ: Methuen, 1987); Meg Luxton, *More Than a Labour of Love: Three Generations of Women's Work in the Home* (Toronto: Women's Press, 1980); Joy Parr, ed., *Childhood and Family in Canadian History* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1982); Mary Ryan, *Cradle of the Middle Class: The Family in Oneida County, New York, 1790-1865* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981); Christine Stansell, *City of Women: Sex and Class in New York, 1789-1860* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1987).

<sup>10</sup> See, for instance, Bettina Bradbury, *Working Families: Age, Gender and Daily Survival in Industrializing Montreal* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1992); Caroline Daley and Deborah Montgomerie, eds., *The Gendered Kiwi* (Auckland: Auckland University Press, 1999); Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall, *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class, 1780-1850* (London: Hutchinson, 1988); Davidoff, *Worlds Between: Historical Perspectives on Gender and Class* (New York: Routledge, 1995), 227-76; Janet Guildford and Suzanne Morton, eds., *Separate Spheres: Women's Worlds in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century Maritimes* (Fredericton, New Brunswick: Acadiensis, 1994); Linda Kerber, "Separate Spheres, Female Worlds, Woman's Place: The Rhetoric of Women's History," *The Journal of American History* 75, 1(1988), 9-39; Joy Parr, *The Gender of Breadwinners: Women, Men and Change in Two Industrial Towns, 1880-1950* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990); Ellen Ross, *Love and Toil: Motherhood in Outcast London, 1870-1918* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993); Katrina Srigley, *Breadwinning Daughters: Single Working Women in a Depression-era City, 1929-1939* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2010).

<sup>11</sup> Rather than listing all of the important works that have shaped the field, see the following historiographical discussions: Michael Anderson, *Approaches to the History of the Western Family, 1500-1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980); Bettina Bradbury, ed., *Canadian Family History: Selected Readings* (Toronto: Copp Clark Pitman, 1992); "Feminist Historians and Family History in Canada in the 1990s," *Journal of Family History* 25, 3(July 2000), 362-383; Cynthia Comacchio, "'The History of Us': Social Science, History and the Relations of Family in Canada," *Labour/Le Travail* 46 (Fall 2000), 167-220; *The Infinite Bonds of Family: Domesticity in Canada, 1850-1940* (Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1999);

of French Canada provides a rich example of these historiographical and methodological shifts. Using extensive parish and notarial archives, as well as institutional and census records, these scholars have brought life to the habitant family in New France, the “alternative” families women built in hospitals, schools and monasteries, and working-class families in Montreal during the industrial period.<sup>12</sup> That the family means different things to different people in various times and places, that there is an inherent tension between family ideals and lived experience, that identities are sustained by experiences among and between family members, and that the state, in all its forms, is deeply implicated in family history, are now widely accepted scholarly conclusions.

Oral history and memory work have also played an important role in the development of family history since the mid-1980s. Unlike other methods and sources, these approaches to the past enable scholars to access private worlds, making them particularly valuable for historians of the family. Equally important and inspired by the “new social history” was oral history’s promise to democratize history, giving agency to historical actors by allowing them to tell their stories and share their perspectives. Oral historians, in considering individual experiences and subjectivities, have demonstrated that the family is not a static and straightforward concept: the construction and reproduction of memory, the

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Hareven, “The History of the Family and the Complexity of Social Change”; Tamara K. Hareven and Andrejs Plakans, eds., *Family History at the Crossroads: A Journal of Family History Reader* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1987); Joy Parr, ed., *Childhood and Family in Canadian History*.

<sup>12</sup> See, for example, Denyse Baillargeon, *Making Do: Women, Family and Home in Montreal During the Great Depression*, trans. Yvonne Klein (Waterloo, Ontario: Wilfred Laurier University Press, 1999); Gérard Bouchard, *Quelques arpents d’Amérique: population, économie, famille au Saguenay, 1838-1971* (Montréal: Boréal, 1996); Bradbury, *Working Families*; Marta Danylewycz, *Taking the Veil: An Alternative to Marriage, Motherhood, and Spinsterhood in Quebec, 1840-1920*, eds. Paul-André Linteau, Allison Prentice, and William Westfall (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1987); Louise Dechêne, *Habitants and Merchants in Seventeenth-Century Montreal*, trans. Liana Vardi (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1992); Monique Dumais, *La mère dans la société québécoise: Étude éthique d’un modèle à partir de deux journaux féministes: La Bonne Parole (1913-1958) et Les Têtes de pioche (1966-1979)* (Ottawa: Institut canadien de recherche pour l’avancement de la femme, 1983); Nadia-Fahmy Eid and Micheline Dumont, eds., *Maîtresses de maison, maîtresses d’école: Femmes, famille et éducation dans l’histoire du Québec* (Montreal: Boreal, 1983); Magda Fahrni, *Household Politics: Montreal Families and Postwar Reconstruction* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005); Peter Gossage, *Families in Transition: Industry and Population in Nineteenth-Century Saint-Hyacinthe* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1999); Allan Greer, *Peasant, Lord, and Merchant: Rural Society in Three Quebec Parishes, 1740-1840* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1985); Andrée Lévesque, *Making and Breaking the Rules: Women in Quebec, 1919-1939*, trans. Yvonne M. Klein (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1994); Tamara Myers, *Caught: Montreal’s Modern Girls and the Law, 1869-1945* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2006).

deep meanings embedded in stories, and the relationship between the interviewer and the interviewee complicate notions of the family.<sup>13</sup> Tamara K. Hareven's work reflects these developments well. While Hareven's earliest studies on families of mill workers in New England "reconstituted" the family using a quantitative analysis, she also conducted more than 300 interviews with mill workers, "linking", she wrote in a later article, "subjective narratives to documentary sources" to reveal the inner workings of industrial life.<sup>14</sup> Hareven recalled that these interview experiences "transformed [her] as an historian," and inspired her to explore the construction of memory, including reflections on how and why people remember, and the relationship between memory and the larger social, political, and economic context surrounding memory making.<sup>15</sup> She found that the memories of New England mill workers, as well as those in her later studies in Kyoto, Japan, and Lyon, France, provided her with insights on self-characterization, the ways that people connect their memories and experiences to broader patterns of social change, and "the social structures and the culture within which they function."<sup>16</sup>

It is perhaps unsurprising, given the role of feminist scholars in the expansion of the "new social history", that women's historians were among the first to fully embrace a methodology that provided them with access to women's

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<sup>13</sup>On early memory work and the search for deep meanings see, for instance, Portelli, *The Death of Luigi Trastulli*; Paul Thompson, *The Voice of the Past: Oral History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988); Henry Greenspan, *On Listening to Holocaust Survivors: Recounting and Life History* (Westport: Praeger, 1998); Julie Cruikshank, *Life Lived Like a Story: Life Stories of Three Yukon Native Elders* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1990); Passerini, *Fascism in Popular Memory*; Elizabeth Tonkin, *Narrating Our Past: The Social Construction of Oral History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992); Jan Vansina, *Oral Tradition As History* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985). On collaboration in the interview space see Michael Frisch, *A Shared Authority: Essays on the Craft and Meaning of Oral and Public History* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1990). Since the publication of Frisch's pivotal work, others have explored the relationships that develop between interviewees and interviewers. See "Shared Authority," Special Feature in *Oral History Review* 30, 1 (2003); Katharine C. Corbett and Howard S. Miller, "A Shared Inquiry into Shared Inquiry," *Public Historian* 28 (2006), 15-38; Steven High, Lisa Ndejuru, and Kristen O'Hare, eds., "Special Issue of Sharing Authority: Community-University Collaboration in Oral History, Digital Storytelling, and Engaged Scholarship," *Journal of Canadian Studies* 43, 1 (Winter 2009).

<sup>14</sup> Hareven, "What Difference Does it Make?" 329; *Amoskeag: Life and Work in an American Factory City* (New York: Pantheon, 1987); *Family Time and Industrial Time: The Relationship Between the Family and Work in a New England Industrial Community* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982). Also see Jacquelyn Dowd Hall et al., *Like a Family: The Making of a Southern Cotton Mill World* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1987).

<sup>15</sup> Hareven, "What Difference Does it Make?" 319; "The Search for Generational Memory: Tribal Rites in Industrial Society," *Daedalus* 107 (1978), 141-144; *Amoskeag*.

<sup>16</sup> Hareven, "What Difference Does it Make?" 330.

voices and perspectives.<sup>17</sup> Of these scholars, many have drawn back the curtains on the world of the family to enrich scholarly conversations about how families and homes functioned and were experienced in different times and places, and by different people. Certainly, the examples are numerous, stretching over more than thirty years. In her 2007 *Household Accounts*, Susan Porter Benson uses oral history to understand family economies in the interwar United States; Elizabeth Robert's 1984 book, *A Woman's Place*, uses oral narratives to examine the working-class world of turn-of-the-twentieth-century Manchester, England; and Franca Iacovetta's *Such Hardworking People* published in 1992 uncovers a familial world in postwar Toronto, Ontario, structured by ethnicity, class, and gender.<sup>18</sup> At the same time, feminist oral historians, such as Daphne Patai, Sherna Berger Gluck, and Joan Sangster have complicated our understanding of the emancipatory potential of oral history. While they valued interviewing for the access it provided to women's stories, they pointed to the inherent power relationships between women and researchers within various interview contexts, and in the production of historical knowledge.<sup>19</sup> They encouraged scholars to engage in reflexive self-ethnography, by drawing the moment of memory making, as well as the subjectivity and approach of the researcher into their analyses.<sup>20</sup> Together this scholarship gave greater attention to women and their families, as

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<sup>17</sup> For a historiographical discussion of Canadian scholarship see Bradbury, "Feminist Historians and Family History in Canada."

<sup>18</sup> Susan Porter Benson, *Household Accounts: Working-Class Family Economies in the Interwar United States* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2007); Elizabeth Roberts, *A Woman's Place: An Oral History of Working-Class Women* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell Publisher, 1984); Franca Iacovetta, *Such Hardworking People: Italian Immigrants in Postwar Toronto* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1992). Though less developed, scholarship on fatherhood and masculinity, has also contributed to this conversation. See, for instance, Robert Rutherford, "New 'Faces' for Fathers: Memory, Life-Writing, and Fathers as Providers in the Postwar Consumer Era," in *Creating Postwar Canada, 1945-1975*, eds. Magda Fahrni and Robert Rutherford (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2008), 241-267; Rutherford, "Fatherhood, Masculinity, and the Good Life During Canada's Baby Boom, 1945-1965," *Journal of Family History* 24, 3 (1999), 351-373.

<sup>19</sup> Sherna Berger Gluck and Daphne Patai, eds., *Women's Words: The Feminist Practice of Oral History* (New York: Routledge, 1991); Joan Sangster, "Telling Our Stories: Feminist Debates and the Use of Oral History," in *The Oral History Reader*, 1<sup>st</sup> ed., eds. Robert Perks and Alistair Thomson (New York: Routledge, 1998), 87-100. See also S. Geiger, "What's So Feminist About Women's Oral History?" *Journal of Women's History* 2, 1 (1990), 169-170; Personal Narratives Group, *Interpreting Women's Lives: Feminist Theory and Personal Narratives* (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1989).

<sup>20</sup> Annette Kuhn, "A Journey Through Memory," in *Memory and Methodology*, ed. Susannah Radstone (Oxford: Berg, 2000), 179. See also Franca Iacovetta, "Post Modern Ethnography, Historical Materialism and Decentering the (Male) Authorial Voice: A Feminist Conversation," *Histoire Sociale/Social History* 64, 132 (November 1999), 275-293; Stacey Zembrzycki, "Sharing Authority with Baba," *Journal of Canadian Studies* 43, 1 (Winter 2009), 219-238.

well as to the dynamic interplay between past and present, and interviewer and interviewee in memory making.

Since then, many oral historians have focused on the ways in which oral history is different. Oral sources, as Portelli tells us, have a particular credibility. Unlike written sources, their adherence to “facts” is much less important than their divergence from them. Personal and highly subjective truths that change with time and in various contexts, they reveal a narrator’s relationship to their own intimate history and thus they are “artificial, variable, partial.”<sup>21</sup> We are compelled therefore to view them through an ethnographic lens: as complex primary documents that are the products of historical experiences and relationships in the past and the present.<sup>22</sup>

Although feminist scholars, and others, called on those working with oral sources to acknowledge that their method of production distinguishes them from other sources, few family historians have explored this process in their studies. Many continue to weave oral narratives into their work alongside other sources, failing to distinguish the “peculiarities of oral history.”<sup>23</sup> In many cases, we continue to know little about the context in which the source was created, the relationship of the interviewer and the interviewee, and the dynamics of the interview space itself. Personal information is relegated to the “safe margins”: footnotes, acknowledgements and prefaces in books, revealing little about this important process.<sup>24</sup> This is, in part, a result of the hesitance of historians to draw these subjects into scholarly focus. Although she recognizes the personal and emotional as legitimate subjects of analysis, Franca Iacovetta does warn of their dangers. There is a fine line to walk when functioning as both an historian and a vulnerable observer. We have a great deal of power as “producers of knowledge,” and we must be careful when inserting ourselves into our studies; the personal can easily become self-indulgent.<sup>25</sup> Undoubtedly, this kind of scholarship is hard work. In addition to raising important ethical issues, it is emotionally charged, draining, revealing, and even humiliating, ultimately requiring practitioners, as Ruth Behar points out, to relinquish their cloak of academic objectivity: “To write

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<sup>21</sup> Alessandro Portelli, “The Peculiarities of Oral History,” *History Workshop* 12 (Autumn 1981), 103.

<sup>22</sup> Virginia Yans-McLaughlin, “Metaphors of Self in History: Subjectivity, Oral Narrative, and Immigration Studies,” in *Immigration Reconsidered: History, Sociology, and Politics*, ed. Virginia Yans-McLaughlin (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), 262.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*; Portelli, “The Peculiarities of Oral History.”

<sup>24</sup> Iacovetta, “Post Modern Ethnography, Historical Materialism and Decentering the (Male) Authorial Voice: A Feminist Conversation,” 283.

<sup>25</sup> Iacovetta, “Post Modern Ethnography, Historical Materialism and Decentering the (Male) Authorial Voice: A Feminist Conversation,” 287-291.



vulnerably is to open a Pandora's Box. Who can say what will come flying out?" or how useful it will be for our understanding of the history of families.<sup>26</sup>

The field is, however, slowly changing; as in the past, feminist scholars have often been at the forefront of these changes. Carolyn Steedman has, for instance, explored her own memories of childhood and the role that her mother played in creating those memories. What emerges is a highly personal narrative that elicits details about her family and its history, as well as her working-class identity and experiences.<sup>27</sup> Feminist sociologist Mary Patrice Erdmans spent four years interviewing and working with her family members, the "Grasinski Girls", exploring her relationships with them, their memories, and the generational differences between herself and them. A familial insider, she sought to give them a voice on their own terms and in their own words, breaking down the distance and lack of emotion that typically characterizes academic writing.<sup>28</sup> Although Martha Norkunas set out to explore the meanings implicit in the public monuments of Lowell, Massachusetts, she also wove her subjectivity and her family's relationship to this place into her writing. While pondering whose history was worth commemorating in this community, Norkunas reconstructed her own family's role in the making of this place. The result is a history that stresses the importance of family and its relation to and intersection with local and national narratives.<sup>29</sup> Katherine Borland, Pamela Sugiman, and Stacey Zembrzycki also contribute to this important methodological shift in the field, exploring the conflicts of interpretation that can occur when working with oral sources. They insert themselves into their narratives and demonstrate the delicate ways that we must negotiate interpretive authority in our research, especially when working with family members. Interestingly, they also refer to some of the ethical dilemmas that arise in this context, noting how they navigate issues of consent, mitigation of harm, and right of withdrawal.<sup>30</sup> There are conflicts of interest and special obligations that go hand in hand with studying one's own family. Annette

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<sup>26</sup> Ruth Behar, *The Vulnerable Observer: Anthropology That Breaks Your Heart* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1996), 19.

<sup>27</sup> Carolyn Steedman, *Landscape for a Good Woman: A Story of Two Worlds*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1987).

<sup>28</sup> Mary Patrice Erdmans, *The Grasinski Girls: The Choices They Had and the Choices They Made* (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 2004).

<sup>29</sup> Martha Norkunas, *Monuments and Memory: History and Representation in Lowell, Massachusetts* (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 2002).

<sup>30</sup> Katherine Borland, "'That's Not What I Said': Interpretive Conflict in Oral Narrative Research," in *Women's Words: The Feminist Practice of Oral History*, eds. Sherna Berger Gluck and Daphne Patai (New York: Routledge, 1991), 63-75; Pamela Sugiman, "'These Feelings That Fill My Heart': Japanese Canadian Women's Memories of Internment," *Oral History* 34 (2006), 69-84; Zembrzycki, "Sharing Authority with Baba." Also see Caroline B. Brettell, *When They Read What We Write: The Politics of Ethnography* (Westport, Connecticut: Bergin and Garvey, 1993).

Kuhn and Hilda Kean remind us of the secrets that structure families and the sensitivity that these kinds of studies warrant. They approach the examination of their own families through memory but also use artifacts and material culture to “construct a notion of self and to reject ‘conventional cultural institutions as the sole arbiters of legitimacy and value.’”<sup>31</sup> While Kean uses her parents’ home, and all of the “stuff” it contains, as an archive to reconstruct her family’s history, Kuhn relies on family photographs to tell stories about her past and make “connections between ‘public’ historical events, structures of feeling, family dramas, relations of class, national identity and gender, and ‘personal’ memory.”<sup>32</sup> Families and homes, as these studies demonstrate, must be considered as archives where memories are made, re-made, and transmitted between and among members, experiences take place, and identities are moulded and rooted.

There is no doubt that genealogy’s popularity, as one of the fastest growing hobbies and most profitable business ventures in North America, is encouraging many scholars to turn their gazes inward and consider their own families as worthy subjects of study. “[A] practice through which ideas of personal, familial, collective, ethnic and sometimes national senses of culture, location, and identity are shaped, imagined, articulated, and enacted,” the Internet has contributed to genealogy’s appeal, giving us quick and easy access to helpful information as well as a complex global network of contacts.<sup>33</sup> Our intrinsic desire to understand who we are and where we come from is just a click away. We can “find” and contact relatives or plan trips to the homes of our ancestors; genealogy tourism has been quite a force in Ireland, for instance. For a monthly fee, websites, like [www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com), go one step further, offering its members entry to the “world’s largest family history resource”; one of the biggest online subscription businesses on the Internet, this website has over 850 000 paid

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<sup>31</sup> Hilda Kean, *Personal Lives, Public Histories: Creating Personal and Public Histories of Working-Class London* (London: Rivers Oram Press, 2004), 6. On material culture and collecting see Paul Ashton and Hilda Kean, eds., *People and Their Pasts: Public History Today* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009); Susan Pearce, *On Collecting: An Investigation into Collecting in the European Tradition* (London: Routledge, 1995); Pearce, *Interpreting Objects and Collections* (London: Routledge, 1994); Hilda Kean, Paul Martin, and Sally J. Morgan, eds., *Seeing History. Public History in Britain Now* (London: Francis Boutle Publications, 2000).

<sup>32</sup> Kuhn, *Family Secrets*, 5

<sup>33</sup> Catherine Nash, “Setting Roots in Motion: Genealogy, Geography, and Identity,” in *Disputed Territories: Land, Culture, and Identity in Settler Societies*, eds. David Trigger and Gareth Griffins (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2003), 31. For an interesting debate about the importance of the Internet in genealogical research see Jennifer Bunting, “Has Genealogy Peaked as a Hobby?” <http://newzeum.wordpress.com/2009/08/04/has-genealogy-peaked-as-a-hobby/>, last accessed on 17 March 2010.

subscriptions and more than 10 million people using its resources every month.<sup>34</sup> As members compose their own family trees, they can peruse thousands of British, Canadian, American, or other international records while they connect with a community of like-minded individuals who share what some have described “as an infection, an obsession, a bug you catch and cannot shake off.”<sup>35</sup> Although genealogy remains marginalized by the academy, much like public history was before its rather recent rehabilitation, its professionalization is long overdue given that the familial past, rather than impersonal national narratives, resonates most with us.

In addition, new forms of media are having a serious impact on how we think about and do oral history; historians are using digital technologies to both collect and interpret stories. Indeed, we are in a truly transformative period, especially when it comes to thinking about what happens after the interview. “This is an important point,” according to Steven High, “as oral historians have been so focused on the making of the interview that we have spent remarkably little time thinking about what to do with the audio or video recordings once they are made.”<sup>36</sup> As Michael Frisch notes, “[the] Deep Dark Secret of oral history is that nobody spends much time listening to or watching recorded and collected interview documents.”<sup>37</sup> This reality is changing, however. A growing number of oral historians have begun to seriously consider how digital technologies may offer new ways of engaging with the orality and content of interviews. We are certain that the digital world also offers scholars a range of possibilities for working with memories of family and home.

Canadian oral historians, and particularly those working at Concordia University’s Centre for Oral History and Digital Storytelling (COHDS), are leading the way when it comes to exploring new and exciting approaches to examining the stories of our pasts.<sup>38</sup> What happens “after the interview” is quickly becoming just as important as what takes place within the interview itself. In addition to building free, open-source, oral history software, Stories Matter,

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<sup>34</sup> For more information about these statistics and this popular website see “Second Largest Hobby in America: Millions of Americans Do It Every Day,” <http://corporate.ancestry.com/press/press-releases/view/?id=307>, last accessed on 17 March 2010.

<sup>35</sup> Nash, 44.

<sup>36</sup> Steven High, “Telling Stories: A Reflection on Oral History and New Media,” Keynote Address to the British Oral History Society, Glasgow, Scotland, July 2009.

<sup>37</sup> Michael Frisch, “Three Dimensions and More: Oral History Beyond the Paradoxes of Method,” in *Handbook of Emergent Methods*, eds. S. Nagy Hess-Biber and P. Leavy (New York: Guilford Press, 2008), 223.

<sup>38</sup> For more information about the centre go to: <http://storytelling.concordia.ca>. There are two other oral history centres in the country, at Nipissing University and the University of Winnipeg, that are also engaged in important work as well. See <http://www.nipissingu.ca/history/> and <http://ohc.freeculture.ca/>.

members of COHDS are using the Internet to present their oral history projects in innovative ways.<sup>39</sup> Many of these virtual “soundscapes”, “memoryscapes”, and “memory maps” tell fascinating stories about place, family, and people’s relationships to the past and present while forging new interdisciplinary paths between fields like history, geography, communication, and new media.<sup>40</sup>

Nancy Rebelo and Jasmine St. Laurent’s work, entitled *Project 55*, is an excellent example of these new developments.<sup>41</sup> This memoryscape encourages us to interact with the people who were interviewed and the places that they recounted in the interviews Rebelo and St. Laurent conducted. After visiting *Project 55*’s website and downloading the accompanying guide and the audio file onto a personal listening device, users board bus 55, which takes them northward on St.-Laurent Boulevard in the heart of Montreal, Quebec. This street, also known as the Main, has been a destination and settling place for many immigrants who came to Canada in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. As the bus travels down the Main we hear stories from a diverse group of immigrants who recount successes, failures, and challenges. Family and home are integral to these stories. This kind of project pushes us to think about the past and the present and the transformations experienced by the street and its inhabitants. Certainly, it shows the possibilities of using sound, memory, and place in complex, meaningful, and interdisciplinary ways. As Toby Butler notes, projects like these “can be a ‘live’ embodied, active, multi-sensory way of understanding geographies in both time and space.”<sup>42</sup> We would add that they also help us reconceptualize the family and the home.

*Remembering Family, Analyzing Home* builds on these historiographical and methodological developments. It makes clear that the earliest inspirations in the field – a willingness to think in interdisciplinary ways and a desire to understand and empower ordinary people through the stories they tell – continue to shape this body of scholarship. It also highlights new and unique approaches to the history of the family by exploring the possibility of viewing the family and the

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<sup>39</sup> For more information on Stories Matter go to: <http://storytelling.concordia.ca/storiesmatter/>.

<sup>40</sup> For a discussion about “memoryscapes” see Toby Butler, “Memoryscape: How Audio Walks Can Deepen Our Sense of Place by Integrating Art, Oral History, and Cultural Geography,” *Geography Compass* 1, 3 (2007), 360-72; “A Walk of Art: The Potential of the Sound Walk as Practice in Cultural Geography,” *Social and Cultural Geography* 7, 6 (December 2006), 889-908. To view the projects of COHDS’ scholars, go to:

<http://storytelling.concordia.ca/workingclass/index.html>. Joy Parr and Stacey Zembrzycki are also exploring virtual memoryscapes in their work on megaprojects and environmental history and ethnic history. See Parr’s website, <http://megaprojects.fims.uwo.ca/>, and the review of it in this collection, and Zembrzycki’s website: [www.sudburyukrainians.ca](http://www.sudburyukrainians.ca).

<sup>41</sup> To learn more about *Project 55* go to:

<http://storytelling.concordia.ca/workingclass/WebsiteSections/01Projects/2006/project55/index.html>.

<sup>42</sup> Butler, “A Walk of Art,” 905.

home as subjective archival sites where artifacts carry memories, members tell and re-tell stories, experiences occur, and identities take shape.<sup>43</sup> Many of the authors in this collection employ genealogical approaches and personalized scholarship. They are courageous and forthcoming when it comes to envisioning their own families and homes as archives, exposing their personal worlds to be explored and critiqued.

Encouraged by developments in digital storytelling and the analysis of memoryscapes, we strongly encouraged our authors to think outside the traditional box of the printed academic journal and thus their submissions include photographs, artifacts from personal collections, annotated transcripts, and audio and video clips. The digital world and the seeming limitlessness of the Internet make publishing online advantageous, providing us with various means through which we may re-envision families and homes. By approaching the history of family in this way, we democratize the archive, move beyond the blurry boundaries that constitute the public and private spheres, and offer new ways of understanding family memories.<sup>44</sup> Moreover, this special edition on oral history and the family serves as a kind of “re-birth” for the *Oral History Forum d’histoire orale*; this is the first open-source, guest-edited, special edition of the journal since it went online in 2008 as the online journal of the Canadian Oral History Association (<http://www.oralhistoryforum.ca>). We hope that this issue will spark new and exciting conversations and inspire interest in this journal as a meeting place for scholars, community activists, librarians, students, archivists, and others who use oral history and memory to explore the past.

### **Families As Archives: Sites of Remembering**

Several of the articles in this collection highlight families as sites of remembering, locations where people weave individual, familial, and collective narratives together to tell their stories. Some of the most influential literature in the field of memory studies has shown us how individuals employ cultural narratives to maintain and insert themselves into collective myths. In *Doña María’s Story*, Daniel James explores the life story and memory narratives of Doña María, a political and union activist from Argentina. One of the most prominent myths that María employs is that of the rebel woman. By doing so, James argues, she gives

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<sup>43</sup> Steven High, “Sharing Authority: An Introduction,” *Journal of Canadian Studies* 43, 1 (Winter 2009), 22. Also see Stacey Zembrzycki’s article, “Sharing Authority with Baba,” in this volume.

<sup>44</sup> When referring to the binary categories of public/private, family/state, home/work, Bettina Bradbury and Tamara Myers argue that these are artificial distinctions because of their fluidity. See their “Introduction,” in *Negotiating Identities in Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century Montreal*, eds. Bradbury and Myers (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2005), 6.

her individual story stability and connection.<sup>45</sup> While drawing on collective narratives, people also weave familial and individual narratives into their stories. Katrina Srigley's article in this collection examines the Depression-era memories of four sisters. Their recollections of their father, a Toronto Transit Commission motorman, bookie and bootlegger, and their "perfect" mother figure centrally in their stories, highlighting the importance of gender, class, and age, as well as collective narratives of unemployment, to both their past and present. For eldest sister Nell Moran, the Great Depression was about the stability and prosperity provided by her breadwinning father. From younger sisters Margaret McLean and Joyce Cahill, we learn about a family world held together by their mother, which included adventure, excitement, and some disappointment. Ivy Phillips' memories of her family during the 1930s celebrate her mother, but also point to the troubling and difficult consequences of crime, alcoholism, and mental instability. Ultimately these sisters' stories of strife are shaped by their individual and group identities, the memory making context, as well as silences and myths. They reveal how remembering family is also about imagining ourselves, our families, and our communities.<sup>46</sup>

In his study of three generations of German-Canadian women, which includes a grandmother, daughter, and granddaughter, Alexander Freund finds similar patterns and pushes historians to think about the benefits of employing a multi-generational, family interview approach in their work. It is in this setting that Freund discovers how the Hiebert family crafts a complex but eventually comforting meta-narrative about Nazism, victimization, collective guilt, and heroism. These women refer to a number of "foundational family stories" when speaking to Freund and although their telling and the meanings that they attach to them vary, their use of these stories demonstrates how intergenerational communication about the past can lead to the creation of stabilizing familial myths. In this case, the stories that family members choose to pass on reveal a great deal about their identities, the ways that they rationalize complicated and sometimes troubling family memories, and how they understand their place in the world.

As the articles by Lainie Jones, John Wolford and Katy Finch make clear, collective myths and silences also sustain relationships between family members. Like those deeply engaged in genealogical quests, a desire to know who they are and where they come from inspires these scholars. As they discuss intergenerational memories within their own families, we get a sense of their individual and familial identities. Interestingly, their narratives focus on the

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<sup>45</sup> Daniel James, *Doña María's Story: Life History, Memory, and Political Identity* (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 2000), 186, 157-212. Also see Luisa Passerini, *Fascism in Popular Memory*; Portelli, *The Death of Luigi Trastulli*.

<sup>46</sup> Kuhn, *Family Secrets*, 1, 2.

stories told by and about deceased loved ones and so they never face any of the ethical dilemmas that scholars like Borland, Sugiman, and Zembrzycki outline in their work.

In Jones' case she explores her mother's past and her recollections of that past as a journey of self-discovery, understanding herself by understanding her mother's story. As Jones states:

Before I began this project I would have described my mother's life as a dense fabric of stories. Now, I realize it is more like the lace doilies she loved – yarns patterned around holes to form a pleasing shape. Her stories are the threads that hold the pattern but the holes they weave around, the silences she kept and the gaps in my knowledge of her are equally part of the pattern and tell their own stories.

By piecing together her mother's story, Jones tries to reconcile herself to her relationship with her mother, and to her slow realization that she is, in some ways, exactly like her. Parent-child relationships take on many forms, and through memory we see the reverberations of the past in the present and the ongoing formation and reformation of identity that occurs through these relationships and memories of them.

In their study, John Wolford and Katy Finch examine the recently discovered private collection of Leah Jackson Wolford – their grandmother and great grandmother – and the familial stories that surround this woman as archival sites. While sharing intergenerational memories and exploring the collection itself, they deconstruct the myths and secrets surrounding Leah. They want to better understand Leah and her life as well as themselves; few family members knew anything about her given that she died in childbirth at an early age. Realizing that everyone held different notions of this woman, based upon their own values, perspectives, and ideals, Wolford and Finch use material culture and oral history to break down her mythic persona. Their analysis of family memories adds “depth, texture, and personality” to this family archive and provides a more nuanced understanding of the family myths by which we choose to live. Whereas Srigley and Freund look at how such myths are perpetuated and made, Wolford and Finch offer an interesting deconstruction of one that is already deeply entrenched in their family's lore.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> Wolford and Finch's use of family photographs is particularly compelling, opening up a conversation that has been “suspended” for generations and reminding us that this type of source can serve as “anthologies, adventures, meditations, and shrines.” See Martha Langford's *Suspended Conversations: The Afterlife of Memory in Photographic Albums* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2001) for a fascinating discussion about the connections between memory, orality, performance, and family photograph albums.

In families, memory making is also sensory. In the spirit of Toby Butler, Peter Lewis remembers his family by exploring the aural soundscapes and material documents of his childhood. The remembered sounds of an apple falling from a tree, the roar of air raid sirens in WWII London, England, the voices of the wireless, as well as his childhood letters home and his mother's diary are his archive. Lewis' unique analysis reveals how memory and sensory experiences are intertwined, and particularly the ways that sounds linger and invariably shape our understanding of the past in the present. Recalling the fear that he felt when he heard his first car, Lewis writes:

Mechanical sounds, less common in my childhood, were more significant in the soundscape than now. The first sound I remember is a car passing outside our house in the middle of the night. I was in my cot. Its eerie, sound, growing louder, then falling in pitch, a wailing effect, was, I realized many years later, an example of the Doppler effect. Then it was just scary.

In analyzing the soundscapes of his past, Lewis better understands his memories of family and home, as well as those of his mother and his father in WWII England.

### **Families As Archives: Sources of Identity and Experience**

The relationship between family, identity, and memory making is complex. In her article, Milena Buziak points to their interconnectedness when her interviewee, Chantria Tram, states, "I think oral history is essential in forming families; the structures, expectations and obligations of the members are formed because of what they know of their past." Indeed, family and memory sustain one another. This is particularly clear when thinking about subjectivity and experience. Our memories of family, "the products of our remembering," says Annette Kuhn, "place us as members both of families and wider communities."<sup>48</sup> They also provide us with a "window on the subjective," and individual dimensions of family experiences.<sup>49</sup> Buziak understands this well. As the co-founder of the Apsara Theatre Company and the director of a one-woman show called *Someone Between*, she has watched the personal and artistic journey of its writer and performer Chantria Tram. An oral history performance about Tram's struggle to understand her family, its history, and her "hybrid identity", it also explores what it means to stage oral histories, which are, in the end, inherently performative in their own right. While pushing Tram on a journey to understand the two worlds

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<sup>48</sup> Kuhn, "A Journey Through Memory," 179.

<sup>49</sup> High, 22.



between which she is caught, presenting oral history on the stage allows those in the audience “to connect their individual struggles to those experienced by others.” As Della Pollock eloquently states: “[Oral history performance] democratizes tellers and listeners by easing the monologic power of *what is said* into the collaborative, cogenerative, and yet potentially discordant *act of saying and hearing* it.”<sup>50</sup> This is not only a reflective piece that ponders personal history and identity, but also inspires dialogue, through oral history, between generations and across diverse communities.

Tina Block, Sharon Utakis and Nelson Reynoso, Robert Rutherford, and Kathleen Ryan explore connections between memory, subjectivity, and experience in their articles in this collection. In doing so, they reveal the ongoing use of oral history as a source for understanding the identities and experiences of historical actors and memories of them in the past and present. In her oft-cited article, “Telling Our Stories,” Joan Sangster argues that we must remain committed to understanding historical materiality, even while we recognize that memories are constructed in the present.<sup>51</sup> The articles here provide further evidence that it is important to consider how people remember and the “concrete and definable” experiences that are part of that remembering.<sup>52</sup>

Tina Block considers religion and irreligion as sources of identity for working-class families in the Pacific Northwest in “‘Toilet-seat prayers’ and Impious Fathers”. Block’s oral histories reveal the complicated and disorderly manner in which religion was lived by families in this region during the postwar period. In fact, families engaged and disengaged with religion in ways that were messy, inconsistent, and much more complicated than simple dichotomies such as sacred/secular, elite/popular, or lay/clergy suggest. Taking us into the “dark corners” of family life, Block uncovers the “comingling of official and informal modes of spiritual expression,” both within and outside of official spaces of worship. She also reveals how religion, in all its facets, shaped experiences and the familial identities that resulted.

In their article, Sharon Utakis and Nelson Reynoso explore the migration experiences of three Dominican immigrants living in the United States. While the life stories of Manuel, Ynggrid, and Maria reveal themes familiar in immigration scholarship, economic disenfranchisement, chain migration, and the importance of gender to immigration, they also highlight the centrality of the family and the personal and intimate consequences of building and maintaining transnational family relationships. Certainly, the family was, in all cases, the reason for change:

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<sup>50</sup> Della Pollock, “Introduction: Remembering” in *Remembering: Oral History Performance*, ed. Pollock (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2005), 4.

<sup>51</sup> Sangster, “Telling Our Stories,” 97.

<sup>52</sup> Joan Sangster, *Earning Respect: The Lives of Working Women in Small-Town Ontario, 1920-1960* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995), 10.

all of them came to the United States to create better lives for their family members even though this decision put various stresses on them. There is no doubt that families were tested in this process. “The day I left my mother,” remembered a fourteen-year-old Dominican girl, “I felt like my heart was staying behind”.<sup>53</sup> The challenges of “mothering from afar” had a significant impact on the relationships between migrant women and their children.<sup>54</sup> In sharing these stories, Manuel, Yngrid, and Maria call attention to the deeper meanings implicit in their choices, revealing a great deal about power and powerlessness and the identities of migrants and their families.

Both Robert Rutherford and Kathleen Ryan use life story interviewing to understand the history of parents. In “Just Nostalgic Family Men?” Rutherford explores an understudied area in family history: fatherhood. Focusing on three men, he compares their sense of fatherhood’s significance in the postwar years across class and ethnic lines and explores the role of nostalgia in their memories of work, leisure, and family life. In doing so, Rutherford offers intriguing examples of the manner in which memories can navigate the boundaries between fact and fiction. Kathleen Ryan employs personalized scholarship in her work to understand the silences in the stories about her mother’s life, and, unlike the other articles in this collection, to redefine family. Similar to Steven High’s study of displaced workers, she examines how family was recreated outside the traditional boundaries of the home, among members who were not related through blood ties.<sup>55</sup> Using life story interviews conducted with women who served in the women’s branches of the United States Navy (WAVES) and Coast Guard (SPARS) during the Second World War, she uncovers how a sense of family developed between these women. According to Ryan, “[the] camaraderie found in the WAVES and SPARS during the war years became ‘the next best thing to family.’” This bond of shared experiences transcended the women’s wartime service, providing a foundation for their identities in the postwar period.

## Conclusion

The scholarship in this collection is concerned with family memories and the intimate archives that house them. It asks how and why people construct their recollections in the manner that they do and highlights the journeys of self-

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<sup>53</sup> Carola Suárez-Orozco, Irna Todorova and Josephine Louie, “Making Up For Lost Time: The Experience of Separation and Reunification Among Immigrant Families,” *Family Process* 41, 4 (2002), 634.

<sup>54</sup> Charlene Tung, “The Cost of Caring: The Social Reproductive Labor of Filipina Live-in Home Health Caregivers,” *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies* 21, 1/2 (2000), 67.

<sup>55</sup> See Steven High, *Industrial Sunset: The Making of North America’s Rust Belt, 1969-1984* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2003).

discovery that are often part of remembering. Furthermore, the articles interrogate the role of researchers in the memory-making process. Families, and memories of family and home, are sites where past and present, myth and experience, individual and collective converge. They are national and transnational; they are also generational. They provide a terminus through which comparisons and connections can be made across and between borders, in time, place, and among individuals. Indeed, the landscape, or memoryscapes, of family are of historical interest to us because when we venture into different familial worlds we reveal different ways of knowing and understanding the experiences of living and memorializing family.

As with any scholarly conversations, much remains unsaid: as Robert Rutherford and Tina Block point out, fatherhood and religious identity continue to be understudied, particularly in relation to the family. The role of colonialism and race in memory making is also underexplored despite the recent and important work done by Adele Perry and others. We hope then that this collection will inspire discussions about transnational and interdisciplinary approaches to the history of the family. The family and the stories that we tell about our families create sites of remembering and act as sources of identity and experience. When we remember our families and analyze our homes we are developing a better understanding of our collective worlds.