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Contact Information

Dr. Hagai Gringarten, Editor-in-Chief, *Journal of Multidisciplinary Research*
c/o O'Malia Hall, 16401 N.W. 37th Avenue, Miami Gardens, Florida 33054
Telephone +1 (305) 628-6635 E-mail: hgringarten@stu.edu

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Mission Statement

The mission of the [Journal of Multidisciplinary Research](#) is to promote excellence in leadership practice by providing a venue for academics, students, and practitioners to publish current and significant empirical and conceptual research in the arts; humanities; applied, natural, and social sciences; and other areas that tests, extends, or builds leadership theory.

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Editorial

Dear Colleagues,

Having just successfully completed its seventh year, the JMR continues to grow and evolve as a journal and research publishing venue. As part of the growing process, we at the journal deem it particularly important to involve, evolve, and connect with academics and practitioners. As Ralph Waldo Emerson once said, “Unless you try to do something beyond what you have already mastered, you will never grow.” This Volume 8, Number 1, edition of the *Journal of Multidisciplinary Research* is being guest edited by Dr. Arnon Hershkovitz, a consummate professional from Tel Aviv University in Israel.

This special genealogy issue of the *Journal of Multidisciplinary Research* is unique – bringing our readers what Dr. Hershkovitz calls a “rigorous, multi-faceted research” in a growing but underrepresented field of academic research.

In this special issue, we bring together five captivating articles, exploring different aspects of genealogy. A collaborative study by researchers from the University of Glasgow and Hebrew University of Jerusalem, with the National Library of Israel and Jewish Records Indexing in Poland, describes the “project, its aims, methodology, and preliminary results...of the first-ever demographic and genealogical study of a national Jewry.” Another study from Ariel University deals with the way in which older immigrants from Argentina constructed their collective memory. A Florida Atlantic University researcher addresses frequent pitfalls related to race and ethnicity in family history texts and practices. A research from California State University, Monterey Bay, addresses family history and power relationships. A study from University College Dublin explores reasons for genealogist participations in information creation, especially in the pursuit of their family histories.

We review the books *Browsings: A year of reading, collecting, and living with books*, by Dirda; *Genealogía Cubana*, by Navarrete and Espino; and *Retirement on the rocks: Why Americans can't get ahead and how new savings policies can help*, by C. E. Weller. We also feature an interesting interview with Colonel Charles H. May of the U.S. Army.

As we continue to bring you interesting and thought provoking research from around the globe, I am happy to present you with this fascinating special issue.

Onward,

Hagai Gringarten, Ph.D.
Publisher and Editor-in-Chief



“[Untitled]”
2016

by Carlos Ramírez

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Editorial

Genealogy and Family History through Multiple Academic Lenses: An Introduction to the Special Issue

Arnon Hershkovitz

This special issue is truly special, as it indicates yet another step forward for genealogy to become a legitimate academic discipline. While millions of people around the world are involved (to some degree) in deepening their knowledge about their family history and constructing family trees, there is only little research about this issues within the academic milieu. Mostly, we find individual scholars who combine their passion to genealogy with their academic credentials and conduct academic studies relevant both to genealogy and to their fields of research. This is the case with the undersigned and with some of the articles in this special issue. As far as I know, there are no research-based departments of genealogy—or of family history, for that matter—in any academic institute. (There are many such departments in academic institutes' libraries, but usually academic research is not within their scope.) As a result, the existing genealogy-related research is scattered across disciplines and communities—therefore, the importance of this special issue, as it demonstrates the rigorous, multi-faceted research in this field.

A Very Short History of Genealogy

Genealogy had played a role in forming the very basis of human societies; as such, detailed genealogies feature prominently in numerous canonical texts of cultural and religious groups, including the Bible, the New Testament, Hesiod's *Theogony* (describing the genealogies of the ancient Greek gods), and Sima Qian's *Shiji* (recording the Grand Historian's genealogical descriptions of the emperors and kings of China). Later on, 'scientific' genealogy became popular in Europe and later in the U.S. as a means for defining, affirming, or sustaining a class hierarchy (cf., Little, 2007; Morgan, 2010).

However, the shift from oral traditions to written records paved the way to legitimizing this search for roots. Yet even then, few anticipated that genealogy would be a practice of the 'masses,' and it was not until the late nineteenth century when across the U.S. and in many parts of Europe archives started to collect, document, organize, and index vast amount of information

and made it available to the public. Nevertheless, it took a few more decades for this information to facilitate the transformation and popularization of genealogy as a popular pursuit, a process that started in the second half of the 20th century and boosted in the early 21st century.

Today, genealogy is a very popular hobby in the U.S. and all over the world, and millions of people practice it. No wonder then that about two years ago, *Time Magazine* had published an opinion column entitled “How genealogy became almost as popular as porn.”¹ But genealogy is not only a hobby but also a market. On one level, it has become a source of income to many hobbyists-turned-to-professionals genealogists who turned others’ challenges to their own opportunity. On another level, big companies have emerged in this field. Ancestry.com—the leading genealogy for-profit company—has more than 2.2 million paying subscribers, and the company’s revenue in 2015 was more than \$680 million (an increase of about 10% comparing 2014 revenues). Having a significant market demand and professionals working essentially in the field is an essential prerequisite of a field to become an academic discipline, and genealogy sure passes this obstacle in its race for recognition as an academic discipline (if such a race exists at all) (Hershkovitz, 2011).

Some readers might wonder why I keep talking about the underrepresentation of genealogy in the academic milieu, while it is already there; after all, History departments populate most academic institutes. The truth is that there is a high wall—some would say, impassible—between genealogists and historians. Roughly speaking, historians focus on chronological narratives, while genealogists emphasize on back-tracing demographic information detached from the context of the environment and events that surrounded its creation; and while historians are mostly telling the story of a period in time or of a given group of people, genealogists are mainly interested in individuals. Of course, this coarse description of the collision between genealogy and history demonstrates how they can complement each other in both knowledge and methodologies.

But more importantly—when it comes to the “If” and “To what extent” of genealogy representation in academia—is the fact that history is only one facet of genealogy. Genealogy-related questions might relate to numerous academic disciplines. Hence, the *Journal of Multidisciplinary Research* is a perfect fit for the first-ever special issue dedicated to genealogy and family history. The suggested taxonomy of genealogy as a multidisciplinary field (Hershkovitz, 2012) defines six components for academic research related to genealogy: people, families, communities, representations, data, and bird’s-eye view. This list of “building blocks” makes it easier for the reader to think about specific fields of inquiry relevant to genealogy. The articles we publish in this special issue represent most of these components.

Some Quick Comments about Genealogy and Family History

People often use the terms *genealogy* and *family history* interchangeably. So, are they indeed different from each other? Looking-up these two terms in the dictionary does not help with separating between them. The online Oxford Dictionaries define *family history* using the term *genealogy*, as follows: “The history of a family; a narrative about this. In later use also: The study of the history of a family or families; genealogy as an area of research” (Family History,

¹ Published on May 30, 2014, available at <http://time.com/133811/how-genealogy-became-almost-as-popular-as-porn> [accessed April 2016].

2016a). Merriam-Webster relates both terms to the very structure of the family, as it defines *genealogy* as “The history of a particular family showing how the different members of the family are related to each other” (Genelaogy, 2016) and *family history* as “A record of one’s ancestors” (Family History, 2016b). While genealogy refers to both the process one takes to trace one’s genealogy and the outcome of that process (in contrast to family history, which refers only to the outcome), it still does not make it clearer how these two terms are any different.

Some make a distinction between these two by explaining that genealogy is strictly concerned with the establishment of family relationships between people, while family history is really about finding as much as possible about the people (e.g., Field, 2002). However, in practice, many people who are interested in the history of their family (or in the genealogy of their family, if you prefer it this way) and take active engagement in researching it are doing both family tree construction and larger-image revelation (as an article by Sleeter, published in this issue, clearly demonstrates). The way the New England Historic Genealogical Society (NEHGS)—the oldest and largest genealogical society in the United States (founded in 1845 in Boston, Massachusetts)—describes itself is a vivid example to that combination of the two terms: “[NEHGS] is America’s founding genealogical organization and the most respected name in family history.”² And if it means anything, the English version of Wikipedia—the largest of the many versions of the online, free-to-use, collaboratively-written encyclopedia (<http://www.en.wikipedia.org>)—had merged the Genealogy and Family History pages about three years ago. So, I advise you, while reading this special issue, to think about these two terms as if they were indeed interchangeable.

The Articles in this Special Issue

This special issue brings together five fascinating studies that explore different aspects of genealogy and do it from different points of view. From personal histories to communities’ narratives; from exploring the ways people preserve the past to suggesting ways of re-examining it critically; and from analyzing existing data to creating new information. They do so using different methodologies, including quantitative, qualitative, and theoretical approaches.

The first three articles share a critical view of narratives, memories, and identities. They do so by demonstrating how the past may influence the present (Sleeter, 2016), how the present may influence the way people tell about the past (Bayer, 2016), and how the present may alter the way people remember the past (Scodari, 2016).

Sleeter (2016) presents the notion of critical family history (recall the critical theoretical traditions) as a means for exploring hidden—often, deliberately—national narratives of the past and how it might influence the present. Focusing on power relationships among sociocultural groups, and using a case study of her own family history (which incorporates both genealogical and historical sources), Sleeter demonstrates how people may recover such narratives. (Spoiler alert: Her ancestors’ wealth—which their descendants, including Sleeter herself inherited—was not only a result of their hard work but also part of a larger story of White Americans amassing wealth at the direct expense (and often using cruel violence) of Indigenous people.

² As appears on the Society's website, at <http://www.americanancestors.org/about> [accessed April 2016].

Bayer (2016) discusses the construction of a collective memory by a unique group of immigrants. Members of this group had left their homeland (Argentina), proud of their ancestral heritage—which included the establishment of a pioneering agricultural settlement—and arrived to the new land (Israel), where its residents rejected the newcomers' past in the Diaspora. (Ironically, these “old timer” residents were newcomer immigrants by themselves not so many years before that.) This ethnography is important to family historians who rely on “histories” that go down in their families, as it demonstrates that besides the flexibility and ever-changing nature of memories – societal, cultural, and political factors affect collective narratives, hence we should take them with a grain of salt. More than that, a careful reading of that article also sheds light on the other direction of memory-society relationship: Being attentive to family histories, one may learn much about the context(s) related to their formation.

Scodari (2016) discusses the recuperation of ethnic identity, in specific the interrogation of racial or ethnic identity that cultivates understanding of historical and current circumstances. Analyzing, among other sources, scenes from U.S. genealogy documentary TV series—such as the very popular *Who Do You Think You Are?*—Scodari identifies frequent pitfalls related to race and ethnicity in family history texts (both traditional and digital). She does so under the frameworks of critical media and cultural studies, and in itself, this article is multidisciplinary as it taps into various domains. Scodari explicitly sets some “recuperating trajectories” that genealogists can take in order to re-evaluate their racial or ethnic identification. Genealogy service providers and genealogy media hosts also can take similar trajectories, so their patrons will follow the recuperation path.

The two other articles refer to the importance of information; however, they do so in very different ways. While Collins, Lamdan, and Tobias (2016) use tons of data from various sources to build narratives of the history of a community at a national level, Fulton (2016) looks at the ways individual genealogists create information. That is, they examine existing information consuming and new information creation, respectively.

Collins, Lamdan, and Tobias (2016) report on a fascinating, novel demographic-genealogical study of a national ethno-religious group as a whole. More specifically, they study the Scottish Jewry from the formation of this group in the early 19th century, to the present day. Using various resources—including censuses, vital records, and court records—they form a unified database describing the very details of this group along 200 years of existence. Analyzing this database, they create historical narratives of the Scottish Jewry concerning the community formation, immigration, growth, dispersal, etc., as well as about the development of social, cultural, and professional sub-groups, in a completely new way. Altogether, the data-driven profile of this community adds to the existing knowledge about its multi-faceted history. More than that, it makes us wonder whether this methodology is applicable to other communities (and to which).

Fulton (2016) studies the very basic building stones of any genealogy research, that is, information, however, from a new point of view. While most studies in this field explore how genealogists *consume* information, Fulton looks at the “other” side of the information-coin, that is, the way genealogists *create* information. She uses an interview-based qualitative approach with a large population (N=53). Indeed, one of the unique characteristics of genealogy—differentiating it from many other hobbies—is that people who practice it often create new information. Fulton’s resulting model of information creation—which she summarized in an easy-to-grasp flowchart—helps us understand the path that leads genealogists to information creation.

As information creation is a high-level cognitive action that may support learning, this article might hint us towards ways of promoting a meaningful genealogy research.

All in all, this special issue is an important milestone in the promotion of genealogy as a legitimate, multidisciplinary academic field of inquiry. Furthermore, each of the articles we publish in this issue also demonstrates practical aspects of such inquiries, which indicate on the strong research-practice relationship that might characterize this field. I wish you pleasant reading in this issue.

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About the Editor

Arnon Hershkovitz is a Senior Lecturer at the Department of Mathematics, Science, and Technology Education, in the School of Education, Tel Aviv University (Israel). He holds a Ph.D. in Science Education, an M.A. in Applied Mathematics, and a B.A. in Mathematics and Computer Science. His research interests lie at the intersection of education and technology, using various methodologies. A hobbyist and professional genealogist for more than 15 years, he has been promoting genealogy as a multidisciplinary research field; from an educational point of view, he studies genealogy as a unique lifelong learning experience.

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Critical Family History: Situating Family within Contexts of Power Relationships

Christine E. Sleeter
California State University Monterey Bay

Abstract

Family history research has become increasingly popular as online genealogical research tools have become widely available. However, family historians, particularly those from dominant social groups, usually end up interpreting their family story within dominant national narratives. As a form of “memory work” (Kuhn, 1995), family history has the potential to unearth hidden or “forgotten” memories about the past and its implication for the present. Drawing on theoretical tools of the critical theoretical traditions, critical family history interrogates the interaction between family and context, with a particular focus on power relationships among sociocultural groups. In this article, I use my own family history to illustrate the recovery of a silenced or suppressed national narrative. Specifically, through an examination of property records and wills, I show how social relationships that colonization forged, rather than being a relic of the past, live on in the present, and how family history can challenge a national mythology that minimizes the importance and ongoing impact of colonization.

Keywords: historical memory, national mythology, critical race theory, colonization, family wealth

Introduction

Family history has become an increasingly popular activity with the growing availability of online genealogical research tools. Studies of why people research family history find that many seek a sense of belonging to place and community extending back in time, anchoring personal identity (Bennett, 2015; Bottero, 2015; Kramer, 2011). Family memories and personal identity, however, are never entirely private matters. Rather, they reflect public, national narratives, often tacitly incorporating the themes and the silences within those narratives (Kuhn, 1995; Lenz & Bjerg, 2007). This article disrupts the incorporation of unexamined national mythologies, particularly those of dominant social groups, into family history. I will show how “critical family

history,” which takes account of wider socio-cultural and power relationships, can delve beneath national narratives.

Family History and Context

Evidence suggests that most family historians focus much more on the family itself than on the social context in which the family lived. In a study of how family historians make sense of ancestors’ social positions in the past, Bottero (2012) noted that people she studied varied in the extent to which they were interested in non-ancestors. Some found the historical context of their ancestors useful only in tracing individual ancestors. Others found non-ancestral contextual information worth pursuing in its own right. After interviewing family historians about how they seek information, Darby and Clough (2013) found that most of their research participants focused on building out the ancestral family tree. Less than 20% sought contextual information about their ancestors’ lives. Even family history television shows like *Finding Your Roots* are biased toward decontextualized family narratives (Scodari, 2013).

It appears to be family historians of dominant social groups who are least likely to contextualize the family within larger socio-cultural and power relationships. For example, Parham (2008), while observing White and Black genealogists researching their Haitian-Dominican immigrant family histories in New Orleans, noticed a distinct difference between how each group navigated its family’s position in relationship to slavery and racial oppression. The White genealogists, tracing individual ancestors, used the past only as a background context in which to locate their ancestors within a traditional narrative that minimizes racism. In contrast, the Black genealogists linked their family’s story with a larger narrative of navigating and challenging racial oppression. Based on analyzing Black genealogical texts, Gardner (2003) argued that, “unlike traditional White genealogies . . . the focus of [two texts by Black genealogists] is clearly on the descendants and their complex positioning in regards to race, slavery’s legacy, and American identity” (p. 154).

While family historians from dominant social groups may view social context as irrelevant, I suggest that ignoring context leads to uncritical appropriation of national mythologies. Uncritical appropriation of mythologies related to racism and colonialism enables people to avoid confronting how their ancestors participated or benefited, thereby avoiding accountability for unjust power relations today. For example, while working with predominantly White groups of teachers in Canada, Norquay (1998) noticed systematic gaps and silences in stories they told about their family immigrant histories. The teachers generally interpreted their family histories in a way that “reflected officially sanctioned understandings of immigrants and immigration” (p. 179) – the myth that Canada, despite not welcoming or affording opportunity to everyone, enabled impoverished immigrants to prosper. Similarly, Picower (2009) noticed White teachers she worked with constructing “a hegemonic story about how people of color should be able to pick themselves up by their bootstraps,” based on their interpretation of their own family stories. For example, a daughter of Italian immigrants described her parents as struggling but eventually succeeding in a meritocratic system she believed worked similarly for everyone.

These examples illustrate a merging of understandings of one’s own family history with the national mythology. But, national mythologies are patterned reconstructions of the past; they are not the past itself (Halbwachs, 1992; Rovinello, 2013). Speaking to the interplay between

family memory and public memory, Kuhn (1995) urges us to ask: Exactly what is being remembered, and, perhaps more importantly, what is being forgotten?

Family and National Mythology

Generally, nation-building projects involve constructing a national narrative based on myths of origin and identity, and building personal psychological identification with that narrative (Bouchard, 2013; Van Alphen & Carretero, 2015). As Anthias and Yuval-Davis (1992) put it, nationalist ideologies use “myths of ‘common origins’ and perceptions of ‘common destiny’ as the main building blocks of ideologies of national solidarity and ‘common culture.’” (p. 58). In societies based on the violence of colonization, national mythologies involve massive forgetting and reconstruction of collective memory (Garretón, 2003; Renan, 1990; Waldman, 2012). In a discussion of African identity in relationship to colonialism, for example, Mazrui (2013) argues that collective memory of the past blends nostalgia, or “idealizing the past as our idea home,” with amnesia, “a partial suppression of an unwanted past” (p. 14).

In the U.S., historical nostalgia linked with amnesia characterizes the dominant national mythology. That mythology greatly minimizes the violence of European and White American genocide against the indigenous population and enslavement of people of African descent, bracketing that violence off from the present and creating an imaginary distance between it and the White ancestors. The national mythology tells of immigrants arriving in an empty space and receiving the opportunity to pull themselves up through hard work. Homesteading enabled immigrants and other Whites to acquire “free land” that purportedly belonged to no one (Freund, 2013).

Jacobson (2006) argues that “White ethnic sensibilities” were grafted onto “the very question of European expansionism,” enabling a shift from the “popular Pilgrim-and-Founding-Fathers national legend to the more recent conception of ‘nation of immigrants’” (p. 343). As a result, White Americans regard claims of genocide as “an affront to American exceptionalist narratives of being both a chosen and benign nation” (MacDonald, 2015, p. 412). But, as Toni Morrison put it,

We live in a land where the past is always erased and America is the innocent future in which immigrants can come and start over, where the slate is lean. The past is absent or it's romanticized. This culture doesn't encourage dwelling on, let alone with coming to terms with, the truth about the past. (Gilroy, 1995, p. 222)

Goldstein (2014) observed that in the U.S., “discussion of U.S. colonialism as a contemporary formation remains relatively infrequent outside of Native American studies and leftist or anarchist critique” (p. 12).

It is possible, however, to unearth silenced histories. For example, working with several descendants of the Greene plantation in Rhode Island, Frank and Ryzewski (2013) constructed a historical narrative that accounted for relationships between the New Englanders and the Native American inhabitants. Their research confirms “that plantations in Rhode Island were not merely household farms, but sites of enterprise and commerce in which English settlers ultimately set the terms and prices at the expense of Native Americans who were excluded from the English system” (p. 39).

I coined the term “critical family history” to challenge family historians to construct their histories in the context of social relationships forged through colonization, racism, and other relations of power (Sleeter, 2011; 2014). The critical theoretical traditions, including critical theory, critical race theory, and critical feminist theories, help probe specific kinds of historical contexts by posing specific kinds of questions.

Critical race theory, which theory emerged in the U.S. during the 1980s, examines systemic and customary ways in which racism works (Delgado, 1995). Critical race theorists assume that racism does not disappear, despite narratives of racial progress. A branch of critical race theory – TribalCrit theory – holds that colonization, related to but not reducible to racism, is “endemic to society” (Brayboy, 2005, p. 430). Colonization continues into the present through “European American thought, knowledge and power structures [that] dominate present-day society in the United States” (p. 430).

Critical race theory prompts at least two major kinds of questions. First, since families of both dominant and subordinate groups do not exist outside racial power systems, we should identify the location of our families within the racial or colonial structure, ask how that location shaped possibilities open to them, and ask what kind of relationships their own racial/ethnic communities had with others. Second, critical race theory in colonial societies examines how, through the commodification of land and people for profit, colonizers established the basis for their own identity to function like property, thereby cementing material advantages with dominant ethnic or racial identities. In the U.S., for example, according to Harris (1993), both slavery and seizure of Indian land “established and protected an interest in Whiteness itself, which shares the critical characteristics of property” (p. 1724). How did colonization and the commodification of land and people shape one’s family’s historical trajectory, and how have those relationships been manifest over time?

Situating a Question

I descend from European immigrants to the United States. I was born into a professional class family as a daughter of a father who was a physician and a mother who stayed home to raise four children. Although I grew up with few family stories, those I heard emphasized my ancestors’ hard work. My mother, for example, periodically pointed out that her father made good with only a second-grade education by working as a house painter and eventually buying, renovating, and selling property.

When I was six, my father died suddenly of a heart attack. My mother’s parents came to our financial rescue: between them and my father’s life insurance, we were able to keep our house, and my mother was able to continue to stay home to raise us. My grandparents enabled us not only to have home security, but also continued access to public schools attended by other middle and professional class children. Later my grandparents, whom I had never regarded as wealthy, helped put me and my siblings through college. My maternal grandfather’s will divided his assets among his two daughters and four grandchildren; my share helped fund my graduate education. My maternal grandmother established a trust that gave my mother and her only sibling (my aunt) financial security for the rest of their lives. When my mother died, I inherited a share of the trust, which served as a down payment on my house, and when my aunt died, the additional share I inherited helped me pay off the mortgage on my house.

Until I delved into the research reported here, I had not thought much about the source of my grandparents' financial resources. I knew they had worked hard, although the grandmother who passed on the largest inheritance never held a job. Wondering where their financial resources came from, and particularly my grandmother's, led to questions I pursued while researching my family history, which I have been doing for over a decade (Sleeter, 2011; 2014).

As nearly as I have been able to determine, all of my ancestors emigrated to the U.S. from European countries at various times between the 1700s and the mid-1800s. My research process alternated iteratively between seeking family tree data (i.e., data about individual ancestors and family units), and seeking social context data (for example, data regarding other socio-cultural groups whose histories intersected with those of my ancestors). The question I explore below emerged while examining land records and wills of my ancestors. I gathered data regarding land acquisition mainly from deeds in county courthouses (in Jonesboro, Tennessee and Madisonville, Tennessee), property sales reported in digitized newspapers (in Steamboat Springs, Colorado and Decatur, Illinois), and other land records available on Ancestry.com. I gathered data on land values, where I could, from deeds, digitized newspaper articles, and Census data. I located original wills, wills on microfiche, and transcribed wills mainly in county courthouses in Tennessee.

A pattern I began to notice was that several ancestors, in different states and at different times, acquired land from the U.S. government or a state government, rather than from a specific person. I gradually realized these ancestors, knowingly or not, directly profited from U.S. policies that took land from the Indigenous peoples. While the wealth my ancestors built from that land involved work and other investments, it was land theft that made that wealth possible. Table 1 specifies (1) from which governmental entity the land was acquired, (2) the county and state in which it was located, (3) when my ancestor(s) acquired the land, (4) who acquired it (using initials rather than names), (5) how many acres were acquired, and (6) the Indigenous tribe or nation that had lost that land.

Table 1
My Family's Acquisition of Indigenous People's Lands

Acquired from whom	Where?	When?	Acquired by whom	Acres	Whose land?
State of Virginia	Henrico Co, VA	1702-1730	H.B., II	700	Arrohattoc tribe of Algonquin
State of N. Carolina	Washington Co, TN	1772-1975	D/M	704	Cherokee
State of N. Carolina	Washington Co, TN	1783-1788	D.McC./ W.N.	760	Cherokee
State of Tennessee	Monroe Co, TN	1827	G.C.H./ S.McC.	160	Cherokee
Bought from trader who had bought from Cherokee	Monroe Co, TN	1828	W. McC.	67	Cherokee

From wife's first husband who bought from state of Arkansas	Hempstead Co, AR	@1838	B.J.H.	Caddo
U.S. Government	Macon Co, IL	1849-1853	W.H.S.	200 Kickapoo
State of Illinois	Cass Co, IL	1854	H.J.	40 Kickapoo
State of Colorado	Routt Co, CO	1880s	O.McC./C.F.H.	40 or Ute 160

In what follows, I trace the violent transfer of land from Native American to White hands, and its eventual impact on me. I do this to explore the larger question of how colonization constructed oppressive power relations historically, how that history still implicates us, and how critical family history can change the national narrative.

Dispossessing Indigenous Nations, Transferring Land to Whites

My maternal grandmother's parents were from the Appalachian Mountains; growing up, I had assumed them to be relatively poor. A perusal of Table 1, however, suggests they were not, since most people on that table were her ancestors. Here, I will trace the legacy of wealth I inherited from the G.C.H./S.McC.³ family, and the W.McC. family, both of which acquired what had been Cherokee land in Tennessee; and their daughter and son respectively (my grandmother's parents) who acquired what had been Ute land in Colorado.

Writing about the process of seizure and sale of Indigenous peoples' land in Tennessee, Phelan (1888) summarized a pattern that repeated across what became the United States, a story that is ignored in the popular national mythology:

The general groundwork was the same in all cases. Indian lands were taken possession of and then improved. The Indians entered into hostilities, and were eventually defeated and compelled to sue for peace. Treaties were made and increased territory given to the whites, and new boundary lines were established, which were again overstepped. Act after act was passed to legalize usurpations, and all the worst features of civilization were brought into play to win a field for the foundation of a government. (p. 51)

While researching my ancestors in relationship to land acquisition, I found this pattern striking. Initially, hunters and trappers came and began to trade with local Indigenous peoples; settlers (usually armed) who claimed land for themselves came next. In the case of the Cherokee Nation, whose land encompassed what is now the Southeastern U.S., this process began in 1732 when General James Oglethorpe, commander in chief of the British Georgia colony, commissioned a ranger force to defend colonial settlers from the Cherokee and other Indigenous peoples. During the French and Indian War (1754-1763), the British razed and burned 15 Cherokee towns, leaving countless Cherokee dead and 5,000 homeless (Dunbar-Ortiz, 2014). To escape war and increasing White incursion, by the latter part of the 1700s, most Cherokee who

³ I chose to use initials rather than names in order to protect family privacy, especially as I trace ancestors forward.

had lived in what is now southeastern Tennessee had moved farther south. The town of Echota in Monroe County, Tennessee, near where my ancestors came in the 1800s, was the capital of the Cherokee Nation until 1788, when the Cherokee relocated their capital to Georgia (Schroedle, 1998). The British, then the U.S. government repeatedly pressed the Cherokee to cede land. Treaties established boundaries between tribal land and British colonies, then U.S. states. But White settlers, in growing numbers, continued to trespass boundaries, setting up permanent establishments on tribal land, and expecting U.S. military protection from the land's Indigenous inhabitants.

The Utes had lived for hundreds of years throughout what is now Colorado, southern Wyoming, northern New Mexico, and much of Utah. The band closest to Steamboat Springs, where my ancestors went, hunted, and gathered along the Yampa River and considered the hot springs sacred. Beginning in the late 1500s, Utes had contact with the Spanish from whom they obtained horses. French and English trappers arrived during the 1700s. In 1858, gold seekers began to arrive in the Denver area, and three years later, the U.S. government made Colorado a territory, disregarding the Utes as a sovereign nation. The Utes' usual way of dealing with outsiders was peaceful co-existence, as long as the outsiders did not try to take away their land. But in 1868, spurred by Whites moving west following the Civil War, and following from years of conflicts and tensions, the U.S. government forcefully pressured the Utes to cede two-thirds of what became Colorado (Simmons, 2000).

As tribes tried to protect their land from White encroachment, the British, then the U.S. government, sent in the military to protect White families, even when they had trespassed negotiated boundaries. The Cherokee, more than any other Indigenous nation, anticipated White Americans' definitions of what it meant to be "civilized" as a way to protect themselves from conquest. During the 1820s, the Cherokee codified their language into an alphabet that the entire population quickly learned to read with the help of a Cherokee-run printing press. They also established numerous businesses, such as blacksmith shops, cotton machines, schools, and several public roads and ferries (Yates, 1995). In 1819, White people founded Monroe and McMinn counties of Tennessee on land the Cherokee had ceded, with a provision in the treaty that Cherokee families living there would be able to stay. These two counties continued to border the Cherokee Nation for about 10 years. Around 1827, my ancestors arrived in Monroe County. My ancestor G.C.H. bought 160 acres from the state of Tennessee in that year, and a year later, W.McC. bought 67 acres from a trader who had apparently purchased the land from the Cherokee Nation.

Indigenous peoples' attempts to protect their lands from growing incursions of Whites were always met with conflict, ramped up U.S. military pressure, and re-written treaties in which the U.S. government forced the tribes to cede it more land. Usually a "last straw" incident, such as a massacre or discovery of gold on tribal land, precipitated the U.S. military expelling the remaining tribal members. In 1829, with discovery of gold on Cherokee land in Georgia, the state attempted to expel them. President Andrew Jackson pushed through Congress the Indian Removal Act of 1830 that gave him power to negotiate removal treaties with Indians east of the Mississippi. In 1832, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in favor of the Cherokee as a sovereign nation. However, in 1836, U.S. officials negotiated with a small minority of Cherokee that the whole nation would move west. Although the Cherokee National Council did not approve the treaty, the U.S. Senate did, and in 1838, the U.S. military invaded the Cherokee Nation, expelling about 18,000 Cherokees to Oklahoma on the "Trail of Tears." Some Cherokee were

able to flee into hiding in the mountains; their descendants today are the Eastern Band of the Cherokee Nation in North Carolina.

The Utes experienced much the same process of expulsion; the Homestead Act of 1862 accelerated that process. That act allowed a settler to exchange five years of living on public land for 160 patented acres for a family, or 40 acres for a single person, paying only the cost of the patent and surveying. (According to Williams [2000], while theoretically any citizen could purchase land, few African Americans were able to buy land; the vast bulk of it went to Whites). In 1876, the U.S. admitted Colorado as a state. In the Yampa River area near what became Steamboat Springs, White families began to build homes. The more White people arrived, plowing up land for farms, building ranges for cattle grazing, and hunting animals, the more difficult it was for the Utes to survive. White River Indian Agent Nathan Meeker taunted and browbeat the Utes until a group of them finally retaliated, ambushing the agency in 1879 and killing eleven White people. Newspapers quickly published articles urging that, "The Utes must go," viewing the massacre as evidence that the army and agent system could not control them. In 1880, the Colorado State legislature overwhelmingly passed resolution a demanding expulsion of Utes; many Whites wanted simply to exterminate them. By 1881, the U.S. government had deported the Utes from Colorado to a reservation in Utah on very arid land Whites did not want. In 1881, my great-grandfather O.McC. left Tennessee for Colorado with a party of other young men, in search of gold. He did not find gold, but he homesteaded a year later west of Steamboat Springs on what had been Ute land until just two years previously (Crawford, 2015).

Building White Wealth on Stolen Land

My Tennessee ancestor G.C.H. was a speculator who regarded land as a commodity for wealth accumulation; the 160 acres he bought from the state of Tennessee in 1827 was only part of his portfolio. Deeds records in Monroe County show a pattern of him buying and selling land continuously. By 1860, the census listed the family's wealth (real estate + other property) as \$30,000 (\$719,152 in 2010 dollars). Between the 1830s and the Emancipation Proclamation, he also owned between 3 and 6 slaves.

G.C.H. and his first wife had 14 children. One of their eldest, B.J.H. from whom I descend, went to Arkansas where he obtained land for a small plantation worked by six or seven slaves. (I cannot tell whether he bought the land, or took possession of it on the death of its owner, whose estate he administered, and whose widow he married.) When B.J.H. and his wife's three children were still small, he died from injuries sustained in a duel (Arkansas Ties, 1846), leaving considerable debt (Reed and wife, et al, 1861). The three children (one of whom, D.E.H., was my great-great grandfather) went to Tennessee to live with their grandfather, G.C.H. and his second wife. When G.C.H. died, his will divided his estate equally among his children and the offspring of his deceased children. On the basis of a wealthy grandparent having raised him, then inheriting a portion of that grandparent's estate, D.E.H. was able to complete his education, buy a small farm, and later become Monroe County Clerk. One of his daughters was my great-grandmother, who married a descendant of W.McC.

W.McC. was a neighbor of G.C.H., and like him, bought and sold land to expand his wealth, although not as aggressively as G.C.H., and without slaves. By 1860, the census listed W.McC. family wealth (real estate + other property) as \$9,000 (\$275,746 in 2010 dollars). The

will of W.McC. directed that his wife and children each be given \$700 (\$16,766 in 2010 dollars) plus an equal share of his estate after other bequests had been made.

One of his sons was my great-great grandfather J.H.McC. In 1860, W.McC. deeded 132 acres to this son for the equivalent of about \$40,000 (2010 dollars). At some point, my great-great grandfather built a two-story brick house (still standing) on the farm. One of his sons, my great-grandfather O.McC., married D.E.H.'s daughter, C.F.H.

In 1881, O.McC. left Tennessee for Colorado with a party of other young men, in search of gold. He did not find gold, but he homesteaded a year later west of Steamboat Springs. Returning to Tennessee in 1884, he married C.F.H. and took her back to Colorado with him. The couple and their children (one of whom was my grandmother) moved into Steamboat Springs in 1892, where, over the next seven years, O.McC. worked various jobs and managed to buy at least twenty-one city lots, presumably with proceeds from the sale of land he had acquired as a homestead. The family relocated to California in 1899, where O.McC. continued to drift from job to job. In 1912, he transferred the title of several Steamboat Springs lots into C.F.H.'s name, for reasons I do not know. In 1919, he arranged the same transfer of three more lots, which C.F.H. immediately sold. Shortly after that, he abandoned the family and moved to southern California, eventually ending up in prison. Great-grandmother C.F.H., who was renting a house in San Francisco, managed to accumulate money over the rest of her life. Most likely part of it came from sale of Steamboat Springs property and part from her parents. Although neither parent left a will I have been able to locate, I suspect they transferred financial assets to her while they were still alive when it became apparent her husband was an unreliable source of family support.

The eldest daughter of O.McC. and C.F.H. was my maternal grandmother. Both she and my grandfather invested in property (as well as the stock market) in the San Francisco Bay area. Since my grandmother did not hold a job outside the home, I can only surmise the money she had available to invest came from her mother. These were the grandparents who helped my family when my father died, put me through college, and established trusts that supported my mother and later helped me.

Discussion

As Kuhn (1995) explains, "the past is unavoidably re-written, revised, through memory (p. 155). The memories I grew up with minimized the existence of family wealth, linked what we had with hard work of my grandparents, and placed our family narrative within the dominant rags-to-riches mythology of Horatio Alger. Critical family history challenges family historians to situate the family within larger socio-cultural and power relationships in order to look below transmitted family stories, and to tease out the impact of larger socio-cultural relationships on the family over generations. One can also re-read the nation's history through the story that emerges from such an investigation. Frank and Ryzewski's (2013) narrative of a plantation in Providence, Rhode Island, does exactly that.

In my case, having discovered through land records a pattern of my ancestors acquiring land directly from the federal or state government, I wanted to examine relationships between my White ancestors and the Indigenous peoples whose land it had been. Using a combination of family history research tools and historical scholarship, I traced the violent transfer of land from Indigenous to White hands, and its eventual impact on me.

The larger story my research uncovered is one of White Americans amassing wealth at the direct expense of Indigenous peoples, then reframing historical memory in terms of hard work, omitting the history of violent theft. White North Americans generally see conquest as having happened in the distant past, “tragic” in its treatment of Indigenous peoples, but not personally relevant today (Norquay, 1998; Solomon, Portelli, Daniel, & Campbell, 2005). Yet, the wealth disparities remain. According to the U.S. Census Bureau (2012), in 2007 the median wealth of White non-Hispanic families was \$170,400, while that of non-White families was only \$27,800 – less than one-sixth that of White families. I could not locate data on American Indian household wealth, but I could do so on household income and poverty. In 2013, while the median household income of American Indian families was \$36,252, for the nation as a whole it was \$52,176. While 29.2% of American Indians lived in poverty, this was true of 15.9% of the nation as a whole; American Indians have the highest poverty rate of any racial/ethnic group (U.S. Census Bureau, 2014).

There are historical reasons for these disparities. White people constructed a system that enabled land and other forms of wealth to flow into, then remain in, White hands. At its inception, this system rested on very different views about land itself. According to Churchill (1993), Indigenous peoples have traditionally regarded the land as part of the sacred natural order, whose health is “an absolute requirement for their continued existence” (p. 17). Humans live in relationship to other elements of nature; humans “own” none of these. In contrast, Europeans, especially in the context of capitalism, came to define land not as sacred, but as private real estate people could buy and sell for profit. European American founders who brought this conception of land were largely English patricians, many of whom owned slaves to work large plantations. Small-scale settlers (like O.McC.), who obtained homesteads to use for their own wealth creation, followed (Dunbar-Ortiz, 2014). Over time, various laws related to property and transfer of wealth disproportionately kept land and profits in White hands (Hodge, Dawkins & Reeves, 2007; Shamas, Salmon & Dahlin, 1997).

White people’s institutionalized desire to gain wealth and keep it in the family over generations (which my family history research illuminated), and Indigenous peoples’ continued marginalization and poverty, reflect ongoing colonial relationships. Similarly, White historical narratives that minimize genocide and land theft, and that distance White ancestors from violence perpetrated against indigenous peoples enable White people to claim moral innocence and to view White wealth as legitimately accumulated.

Conclusion

Family historical research is increasingly popular and accessible. Most family historians wish primarily to document their individual families rather than critique dominant national narratives. This focus on the decontextualized family appears to be particularly prominent among White family historians (Gardner, 2003; Parham, 2008). Yet, the combination of nostalgia and amnesia reproduces a national mythology about immigrants arriving to an empty space, and having the opportunity to pull themselves up through hard work. In the process, that mythology perpetuates ongoing relationships of racism and colonialism (Brayboy, 2005).

Critical family history prompts us to probe beneath national narratives by situating the family within larger contexts that identify other co-existing socio-cultural groups and probing power relationships across groups. In this article, I have shown how documentation of property

(through deeds records, digitized newspapers, and wills), analyzed in conjunction with the question of whose land it had been earlier, led to an acknowledgement of the implication of my own family in the colonization of Indigenous peoples. Specifically, by focusing on my ancestors' property acquisitions, I was able to document a considerable transfer of Indigenous lands to them from the late 1600s to the mid-1800s, then eventually to me. While this may not be the story most family historians wish to construct, it represents a significant "upending" of a problematic dominant national narrative, and recognition of a different narrative that can begin the process of reconciliation between "settlers" and colonized peoples (Regan, 2010).

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About the Author

Christine E. Sleeter, Ph.D., is Professor Emerita in the College of Professional Studies at California State University Monterey Bay, where she was a founding faculty member. She has served as a visiting professor at several universities, most recently the University of Maine. Her research focuses on anti-racist multicultural education and teacher education. She has published more than 140 articles and 20 books, including *Power, Teaching, and Teacher Education* (Peter Lang) and *Diversifying the Teacher Workforce* (with L. I. Neal & K. K. Kumashiro, Routledge). Her newest book *White Bread* (SensePublishing), which is a novel, explores the profound impact of critical family history on teacher ethnic identity.

Discussion Questions

1. Discuss how critical family history differs from the way most people approach genealogy.
2. How do family stories typically incorporate national mythologies, such as those that minimize ongoing impacts of colonization?
3. How might you apply critical family history to studying your own family history?

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Memory and Belonging: The Social Construction of a Collective Memory during the Intercultural Transition of Immigrants from Argentina in Israel

Yaakov M. Bayer
Ariel University

Abstract

This research article deals with the way in which ‘senior’ immigrants from Argentina, residing in a kibbutz in the south of Israel, constructed their collective memory. This group of Israelis, who emigrated from Argentina to Israel at the start of the 1960s, is a unique group originating from the Jewish agricultural settlements founded in Argentina at the end of the 19th century. Upon arriving in Israel, they encountered a society that rejected their past in the diaspora. This intercultural encounter generated conflict between the wishes of these immigrants to preserve their original identities and cultural heritage, on the one hand, and to integrate into and belong to the host society, on the other—a central element in their Zionist worldview. This research presents the manner in which the politics of the collective memory of the investigated group was constructed, such that it helped the group to reach its goals while allowing for the preservation of the unique past. In this case, the politics and the agents of memory called on the collective memory in order to assign and locate themselves in the kibbutz’s present, and to claim seniority in the kibbutz hierarchy, while appealing the status relegated by the dominant metanarrative.

Keywords: homecoming, collective memory, immigrant narrative

Introduction

Over the past decades, there has been a growing tendency for people to move from one geographic area to another and from one nation-state to another. In the literature, one group of immigrants with special characteristics is called ‘homecoming’ (Markowitz & Stefansson, 2004). According to Lomsky-Feder & Rapoport (2001), those ‘returning’ to their imagined-historic homeland see themselves, to a certain extent, as having been ‘exiles’ in their own countries of origin; thus, they display feelings of having returned to their homeland when reaching their new

destination. Later research deals with the complexity of transnational communities and the ways in which they test national boundaries, as spaces in which multiculturalism, hybrid identities and ‘mixed’ cultures may be realized (Clifford, 1994; Appadurai, 1996; Weingrod & Levi, 2005). As such, the subject of ‘the return’ or ‘homecoming’ has been reconstructed as a complex system of fuzziness and ambivalence, including components of open-eyed satisfaction, in the face of the dissonance between the imagined homeland and the actual, completely new, home being experienced (Stefansson, 2004; Zetter, 1999).

In the case of the Jewish People, whose ‘ingathering of exiles’ is the subject of this article, the most common description, within the context of the Zionist ethos, sees the Jewish People as having been exiled from its historic birth-land, scattered in many directions, while suffering oppression and humiliation due to that dispersion. As such, the concept of ‘diaspora’⁴ is linked to the survival of an exiled community on foreign soil, while considering its stay to be temporary, yet developing systems of institutions, social constructs and ethno-national or religious symbols in order to preserve the community.⁵ Gradually, in many cases, diaspora communities adapted themselves to suit their host societies and surroundings, even becoming central to local cultural creativity (Safran, 1991). This phenomenon created two significant hubs in the lives and identities of the ‘returnees,’ causing two-directional gaps between themselves and the host society in relation to memory. The manner in which the host society perceives their diaspora past and the way the immigrants perceive the past of the host society both impact the nature of the encounter between these two groups and how each group assigns the other group’s status.

Collective memory lends significance and context to personal memory and meets the needs for continuity, belongingness, and meaning for the individual (Halbwachs, 1980). According to Halbwachs (1992), collective memory is dynamic, and its cultivation is a part of the ongoing process of social construction. White (2000) calls this process “the politics of memory,” i.e., the provision of an alternative meaning for past events as a function of circumstances and new events. A group’s narrative is the result of dialogue with other voices and texts. The collective memory and the way in which immigrants remember, and interpret their personal and collective pasts also reflect the immigration process, and interaction between the past in the country of origin and the narrative and social expectations in the new land. This is how the complex and dynamic situation is created—“the politics of memory”—the topic of this article.

⁴ The very term ‘diaspora’ suggests an uprooting from their lawful borders to suffer oppression and failed attempts at integration into host societies whose ‘hospitality’ remains dubious. The space of the homeland, the Land of Israel, is assigned the role of a sacred existence, from which the group was detached, as a result either of ancient sins or moral turpitude. This construction, created by a national narrative, undermines the senses of belonging elsewhere, other than to the central, symbolic place (Levi, 2001).

⁵ These systems included language, religion, values, social norms, and narratives about the ‘land of birth.’

The Construction of Collective Memory within the Context of the Zionist Movement

Collective memory plays an important role in the creation of nations and states.⁶ A society needs unifying motifs; however, when they are lacking, as in the case of a new community or during the process of social reconstruction after periods of depression or following chronological discontinuity, foundation myths, connecting the past to the present, are created (Steiner, 1971). Usually, this process brings about the unification of various groups, the emphasis of national identity, and the backgrounding of other identities (Olick & Robbins, 1998). However, on many occasions, 'counter memories' arise that unsettle the dominant collective memory and cause alternative collective memories. Sometimes, a collective memory is constructed during a struggle between competing 'agents of memory,' a struggle in which each party can suggest a counter-narrative (Shapiro, 1997).⁷

The Zionist Movement and its followers constructed their collective memory while emphasizing an historic connection, perceived to be objective and absolute, between the Jewish People and the Land of Israel and while striving to create historic and national continuity. Those fashioning this memory had to cope with the past that included a long period without sovereignty, a period identified as being one of national helplessness. The Zionist establishment could not legitimize the existence of the Jewish Nation outside the borders of its national territory and so sought to create historic continuity between the present and the distant past by fervently rejecting the interim diaspora period (Roberman, 2005). The period of exile served as an intermediate period that, even if important cultural values were formed then, was itself insignificant, flawed, incomplete, and abnormal (Raz-Krakotzkin, 1993). The envisioning of the exile as an unwanted reality brought about its rejection from the collective memory, along with the intentional disregard for the cultural heritages created during those thousands of years in the diaspora (Almog, 1997).

The new interpretation of the past gave birth to the 'new Jew'—the one who could bear arms, protect his or her own honor, maintain security, and fight for the land. This 'new Jew' was thought to be the opposite of the diaspora Jew—considered to be submissive, lacking in self-respect, subservient, weak, opportunistic, non-productive, detached, and transient (Shapiro, 1997; Almog, 1997). Although the 'new Jew' was fashioned contrary to the diasporic Jew, some modern nationalistic influences are discernible: secularism and the common affinities for culture and territory (Almog, 1997).

In the first years after the establishment of the State of Israel, massive group of immigrants arrived. The various waves of immigrants highlighted the blatant socio-cultural differences between the new immigrants and the settlement 'seniors.' The immigrants' reception was not as 'equals among equals,' but rather as threats to the Zionist dream. In many instances, members of the 'senior' settlements thought the immigrants had inferior, diasporic cultures

⁶ The nation-state often aspires to tell its story as if it is homogenous, wanting to stress the common denominator, to perpetuate it in order to create a connection between the individuals and the groups that comprise a national society, while repressing all that is divisive and different (Anderson, 2006).

⁷ This discourse is relevant to the present field of research, within which an 'inferior' group (in the eyes of the host society) rejects the marginal role it has been assigned in the host society's narrative and adopts a different narrative, one that lends meaning to its life-story, while using values, concepts, and perceptions of the host society.

(Segev, 1998). As a solution to this ‘problem,’ an intentional policy was formulated regarding ‘the ingathering of the exiles’ (negating the diaspora) by means of a ‘melting-pot’ policy. The construction of a single narrative was attempted in order to create a homogenous, uniform society with a common cultural foundation. Israeli society demanded of the immigrants that they marginalize their original cultures, including their religious practices and mother-tongues, to mold them into ‘Israelis.’

Over the years that have passed since the arrival of the members of the group under study, there was a gradual retreat from the ‘melting-pot’ policy and growing openness to cultural and ethnic heterogeneity. As part of this change, the legitimacy of individualistic actualization, the achievement of personal goals, personal wellbeing, and self-fulfillment grew markedly. In this context, ‘Israeliness’ becomes individualized with the creation of personal Israeli sectorial definitions (Rapaport & Lomsky-Feder, 1988; Ohana & Wistrich, 1996). As part of this change, the centers of authority that once existed grew weaker (Albeck, 1990). This change, expressed by the greater legitimacy given to various narratives, led to a rise in documentation and the adoption of diasporic narratives.

Methodology, Research Environment, and the Group being investigated

The research described in this article was done in a kibbutz in the south of Israel. The studied group is a group of ‘senior’ immigrants (*‘olim*)⁸ from Argentina from among the first wave of immigrants to be absorbed into the kibbutz in 1965. These kibbutz members are men and women in the age range of 60-65 years. Prior to their immigration to Israel, they had lived in the district of Entre Ríos, Argentina, in one of the Jewish communities⁹ in that area (discussed below). Their parents and/or grandparents had immigrated to Argentina from Russia and Eastern Europe at the end of the 19th century and beginning of the 20th century. In 1965, all the members of this group immigrated to Israel together as part of the youth movement and have been living in the kibbutz since then.

The members of this group are leading a modest life and, even today, maintain their deep friendships. Alongside the established community activities in the kibbutz, they also hold their own social gatherings. They feel that they are part of the kibbutz and that they were partners in its establishment and foundation.

The present research was conducted by means of open interviews, group meetings, and textual analyses. Some of the interview were narrative interviews, during which their ‘life-stories’ were gathered.¹⁰ These interviews occurred throughout 2007-2009. In addition, films, written

⁸ In Israeli culture, the term *‘olim* refers to ‘immigrants returning home.’ This term comes from the Jewish-Zionist narrative that considers the diaspora to be an inferior situation from which one may ‘rise’ to the Holy Land.

⁹ The members of this group and their families had lived, for certain periods of time, in agricultural settlements in Argentina, most of them together in the same colony. Most had left the colony in their youth and moved to live in Concordia, the nearby district capital.

¹⁰ The assessment of the narrative of these group members and the way in which it was constructed on the basis of their autobiographical stories and memories is supported, among other things, by the principles determined by Halbwachs (1992) that the process of memory has a collective nature, as the expression of the place of each individual rememberer within the social group in which he/she presently lives.

materials, and Internet materials, produced by these kibbutz members were used as part of the documentation of the collective memory and of their actions. In accordance with the accepted ethics in this method (Lincoln, 1995), I chose not to risk harming the privacy of the group members, so I neutralized any details that might identify the participants in this study.

The story of the Jewish settlement in Argentina forms an important layer in the narratives of the group members and is essential to the understanding of the research field. The next section provides a detailed history of those Argentine colonies.

The Original Community: The Colonies of Baron Hirsch in Argentina and the Zionist Movement

The establishment of the agricultural settlement in Argentina stemmed from the distress of world Jewry at the end of the 19th century. Persecutions and attacks in many regions, especially in the Russian Empire and in Eastern Europe, caused massive waves of Jewish migration to various other locations the world-over. In those days, the authorities in Argentina were encouraging immigrants to come, in hopes of settling the frontier areas, as part of the struggle against the native population (Feierstein, 2006). In 1891, Baron Hirsch, a wealthy Jew, founded an organization called the Jewish Colonization Association to help organize the emigration of Jews; for a long period, this organization was the most significant source of finance and agent actively establishing Jewish settlements in Argentina (Eldar, 1992). The Association's ideological basis was founded on physiocratic ideas, according to which the productivity and wealth of a society are the results of agriculture. As such, the emphasis was on the demand for productivity and the return of Jews to working the soil (Avni, 1973). This action brought waves of Jewish immigrants to the Argentine settlement. Such settlements were distributed throughout Argentina and Brazil, though most of those in the project were established in Entre Ríos, in northeastern Argentina. This area is characterized by difficult living conditions: a harsh climate, flooding, plagues of locusts, and droughts—making it very hard for the settlements and farmholds in that area (Avni, 1973).

Over the years, this Jewish community created community organizations that cared for almost all the needs of Jewish individuals, while maintaining an extensive and many-varied Jewish communal life (Avni, 1973). With the passage of time, many of these Jews moved from the agricultural settlements in the project and established their homes in cities and towns within the province (Zablotsky, 2005), while changing their occupations (Freidenberg, 2005).

During the second half of the 20th century the internal migration to the urban settlements and to Israel, caused the settlement project to decline (Avni, 1972, 1973; Reznik, 1987). Nonetheless, and despite the fact that most of these settlers were no longer on their land, this contributed an organic sense of primacy to Argentine Jewry within the context of local society, serving in the war against antisemitism (Avni, 1972).

A majority of the members of this researched group originate from the same settlement, located in the province of Entre Ríos near the town of Concordia¹¹. The members of the

¹¹ Some of these families continued to reside in the farmholds and settlements while sending their children to educational institutions in the district capital, such as Concordia. The 1960s found many Jews concentrated in Concordia, including youths from the nearby agricultural settlements, also including the members of the group being studied.

investigated group were active in their youth, during the early 1960s, in the *Ihud ha-Bonim* Movement (lit. Union of Builders), that was affiliated both with MAPAI¹² and the Kibbutz Movement, and bore the standard of socialist-Zionist ideology¹³. These daily activities were held in the Movement's various neighborhood branches or 'nests' with the local youths serving as counselors, requiring their full dedication, often even expecting them to run activities in branches distant from their family homes (Avni, 1972). Clearly, this period was quite significant in their lives and fashioned their socialist-Zionist ideological perceptions. This activity in the youth movement, their preparation for immigration and kibbutz life, as well as their collaborative lifestyle from a young age up to the present, consolidated their group, forming deep and meaningful friendships. This activity in the youth movement served as a significant memory agent, to some extent fashioning the way in which they would design their past. These immigrants strove to be partners in the establishment of a settlement and to design it in accordance with their beliefs, actively taking part in what they considered to be the redemption of the Jewish Nation in its Land.¹⁴

During the last decade, the Argentine Jewish community increased its actions to perpetuate the memory of the Jewish colonies, focus on its history. Over the years, the Jewish community fostered the mythos of the 'Jewish gaucho,' which became a common term in Argentine discourse.¹⁵

The Argentine settlement project is almost completely missing from the Zionist metanarrative and has almost vanished from Zionist history. Perhaps this neglect, besides the sweeping negation of the diaspora narrative by the Zionist Movement, is a result of the fact that, from the outset, the project stood in opposition to the central trend in the Zionist Movement—because it suggested Argentina as a 'destined land' (Avni, 1973)—as it were, 'Zionism, without Zion.' This perception is contrary to the Zionist perception that views Israel as the exclusive, historic birth-land of the Jewish People.

¹² The Israeli Labor Party, a political-Zionist-socialist movement that was dominant both in Israel and in the diaspora.

¹³ The Movement was organized and operated by means of emissaries sent from the Israeli kibbutzim (Heb. pl. of 'kibbutz') to educate the members in cooperative ownership and financial management, while banning various things such as: ballroom dancing, makeup, fancy-dress cloths, etc., out of the belief in values of equality and modesty (Bar Gil, 2007).

¹⁴ The Argentine settlement was not detached from the Zionist project and much later on even became affiliated with the State of Israel.

¹⁵ By means of the association of the Jews and the mythological figure of the 'gaucho,' the Argentine Jew became connected to the myths and accompanying values so respected by Argentine society, likened to a 'criollo' (i.e., a native Argentine), a pioneer, well-rooted and a partner in the establishment and strengthening of the Argentine Republic. The Jewish community today cultivates the history of the settlements with the goal of emphasizing the contribution of the Jews to establishment and founding of Argentina.

The Kibbutz in which the Group lives and the Unique Characteristics of the Collective Memory in that Context

The kibbutz is an ‘intentional’ society¹⁶ (Poplin, 1972), fundamentally serving for many years as the ‘flagship’ of settlement Zionism. The kibbutz stood for socialist values and most of the kibbutz lifestyles were based on elements taken to be realizations of cooperation and equality. This kibbutz received the Argentine group being studied was considered by many in Israeli society, at that time, as symbols and paragons of the Kibbutz Movement, pioneer spirit and landholding under hard conditions.

The kibbutz members were rife with ideology, which they strove to implement in their daily lifestyles. The ideological commitment of the kibbutz members increased their demands and resolve even with regard to the new arrivals. Previous attempts made at other kibbutzim to absorb other immigrant groups, prior to this Argentine group, had raised cries of “integration hardships” that had reached the kibbutz in question—only strengthening their determination not to compromise in the face of what appeared to pose a cultural threat.¹⁷

In contrast with the great importance the members assign to their Zionist activities, to the transition to the kibbutz, to their unique past in the Baron Hirsch colony in Argentina, the immigration of these group members is integrated into the dominant narrative, as if it was a regular, *not special* episode and the stories of the colonies is missing in the histories of the kibbutz and the Zionist Movement—they are not a part of the dominant metanarrative.¹⁸ The absence of these group members from the kibbutz narrative and the attitude towards them as being merely a labor force was not unusual and characterized the dominant perception in Israel that valued these Jewish immigrants as assets for building the country (Kimmerling, 1999).

Over the years, this kibbutz underwent many changes, to a great extent expressing the abandonment of basic principles and fundamental ideologies from the past. The farming, that had once formed the ideological basis of the kibbutz, drastically decreased.

Findings

Memory Spaces: The Kibbutz and the Argentine Colonies

The collective memory of the group members consists of a number of layers and moves between two main hubs—their past in the Baron Hirsch colonies and their past on the kibbutz—that are clearly central to their lives and fashion the path they take when interpreting the passage of their lives. During conversations I held with group members, they told me that they genuinely

¹⁶ A society, the existence and actions of which are intended to serve defined goals (Poplin, 1972). This is also how Poplin describes monasteries and other societies committed to supreme goals. In the kibbutz case, these goals are nationalism and values.

¹⁷ According to the official sight of the kibbutz being discussed.

¹⁸ Their immigration to Israel is described merely as additional manpower for the developing kibbutz farmstead. Their absorption is described as an intercultural encounter ending with the group members adopting kibbutz culture, and with no mention of their unique past. For example, this is even expressed in the words of the kibbutz Secretary, documented in a film marking 40 years since the groups’ immigration, in the context of a ceremony in honor of that date; it appears on the official Internet website of the kibbutz along with additional historical descriptions by people on the kibbutz.

believed that Israel was the only home for the Jews. Such statements were not exceptional and many of them expressed this, while stating their identification with early basic Zionist ideas and ideologies. It was obvious that the group members assign great significance to the ideological Zionist-socialist aspect of their lives, as the motivating cause and central guiding line in their lives. Despite past ideological changes in the Kibbutz Movement, these group members attest that they have remained loyal to the original values of the Movement and they spoke about their lives on the kibbutz with a sense of active partnership, as founders blatantly proud of their participation from the day of its establishment.

The wish to belong and become a part of the kibbutz is basic to their aspirations and self-definition. The members of this group view their immigration to Israel and their choice of the kibbutz lifestyle as being elevated goals, ever since their youth in Argentina, a source of pride and specialness, specifically when compared to other groups of immigrants and when compared to Israelis in general. Even today, their desire to be seen as loyal friends for the long haul, despite the abandonment of some of these values by the Kibbutz Movement, by their own kibbutz, and by large portions of Israeli society, was blatant in the field. Sometimes, these things were said directly, but more often they were only suggested by emphases placed on certain chapters from their past that they perceived to be fundamental to this commitment, such as: their activity in the Zionist youth movement; the sacrifice they made by leaving their land of origin; their military service in the I.D.F., their fighting in the wars; their diligence; their hard work; their many deeds; and the emphasis on the fact that they still remain loyal to this ideological path, despite the others.

In the narratives of the group members, a central and important place is given to their past in the Jewish colonies in Argentina. Their memories of that period reflect much emotionality and they embrace the past, usually described with great longing and pride. The narratives of most of the group members begin years before their births and personal memories, usually with descriptions of the places from which their fathers had immigrated to Argentina, mostly from the Russian Empire, Eastern Europe, and Besarabia.¹⁹ The descriptions of these places mostly include negative elements, similar in their characteristics to the negative meanings and Jewish suffering associated with the diaspora, as found in the Zionist ethos. The first exile, preceding the settlement in the Argentine colonies, is perceived as a place the essence of which is pogroms, suffering, hatred and persecution of Jews—this in contrast with the agricultural settlement in Argentina, that was assigned many positive elements and was usually not described as a place of ‘exile’ (by means of negative characteristics, as found in the Zionist ethos).

In many respects, there are similarities between the description of the early settlement in Argentina and motifs describing the renewal of Jewish settlement in the Land of Israel. The descriptions of the long and arduous migration voyages to Argentina, while longing to reach the desired destination, raises associations with the stories of the *Ha'apala*²⁰ to Israel. Throughout the story, there are also other similarities between the Zionist action in Israel and the settlement process in Argentina that also exist in other texts from the colonies, in biographies of settlers (Reznik, 1987; Kapin, 2001; Caplan, 2006) and in relevant movies made in Argentina.

¹⁹ An area in Eastern Europe from which many Jews migrated to Argentina.

²⁰ Hebrew: העפלה; ascension, name given to 'illegal' immigration by Jews to Mandatory Palestine-Eretz-Israel in violation of British restrictions.

The collective memory in the group includes the story of the start of the Jewish settlement in Argentina, the activity of the Jewish Colonization Association and its representatives, and Baron Hirsch and the first settlers who founded the colonies. Some of the storytellers lengthened the tragic story about the first settlers in Argentina, the tribulations, the hardships and death they experienced, although none of them were even direct descendants of that group, but rather of other settlers from another area in a later period. Similar tales of the trials and tribulations of the first settlers also appear in biographies written by authors from the colonies (Reznik, 1987; Kapin, 2001; Caplan, 2006) and in historical documents (Avni, 1982; Feierstein, 2006). Apparently, it is part of the popular metanarrative in the Baron Hirsch colonies.

The description of the beginnings of the Argentine settlement is rich with stories having mythical characteristics, making the settlers seem almost miraculous. However, most of these stories focus on the hardships facing the settlers due to the harsh natural surroundings in Entre Ríos. Emphasis was also placed on the ingenuity of the immigrants when coping with the cruel natural environment and the hostiles around them--sometimes the local residents would attack the settlers, even killing them. Another emphasis was placed on the virtuosity rapidly assumed by these pioneers on their homesteads and in their fields despite the harsh conditions.

For the most part, the storytellers take special care to stress that neither the immigrants nor themselves were part of their surroundings in Argentina, and they clarify that they belong to the Jewish People. In the case of the first generation of immigrants, they were often described as Zionists, to some extent, or as having traits appreciated by the Zionist-kibbutz society, or as individuals who arrived in Argentina (for lack of another option) to be saved, or by stressing their Jewish religious fervor, their manner of dress and strict religious lifestyle, the great number of synagogues in the colonies and its fields, etc. In regard to the group members and their parents (generations that became more secular), the insistence on studying in the Jewish schools was stressed, as was the large sacrifice made by the families and the distances that had to be surmounted in order study in two different schools, in addition to helping out in the family homestead, and the affinity for Zionism, the kibbutz and their values.

A description of the daily life in the colonies during the periods preceding the lives of the group members included in-depth descriptions of the social and community relations in idyllic terms of brotherhood, cooperation, equality and a plentitude of love—painting a picture of a model society, warm and consolidated. One of the members of the group aptly described this brotherhood in kibbutz terms: “There was **true mutual responsibility** between people. It was not just an expression. People really lived that way. If someone lacked something, others made sure he got what he needed. There were no hungry Jews. The community saw to everyone’s needs.”

As in other instances, when this was brought up for discussion, it was hinted that (except for the kibbutz, in which the term ‘mutual responsibility’ is a common expression and part of the ideology), there, too, (in Argentina) these things existed not only formally, but in practice. That is to say that there was a sense that real equality and brotherhood was actually realized in the colony, alongside hard work and a rich communal life, even more so than in the present-day kibbutz.

The ideological content of these stories from the colonies and the positive emotions they raise among the group members sometimes reflect an emotional dissonance when faced with the

conflicting statements made by many of them on different occasions and at ceremonies²¹ regarding Israel as ‘the only home for the Jews’ and on Argentina as ‘an historic mistake’ or as ‘a temporary shelter.’ There is no doubt that the colonies and the memories from the colonies are central components in the life stories of the group members and of their personal and collective identities. In some cases, the storytellers chose to describe aspects of the past in the colonies as immigrants in Israel in the kibbutz in the present, especially everything about the social relations between members of the colony, their personal quality and their adherence to values. When contrasting present life in Israel with Argentine colonial life, they often focused on the present and on the alienated lifestyle that, according to the group members, disrupted some of the core values of the kibbutz. In addition, they often hinted at the contradiction between the life they left behind in the colonies and their touted ideals, as opposed to the reality they met after immigrating and the bad treatment they received as new immigrants from those dealing with them in Israel.

The Intercultural Encounter: “They looked like matones²²!”

The group members described their desire to immigrate to Israel as being their life’s goal, representing their ‘self-fulfillment’, which they had sought from a young age, considering the Holy Land to be their land; as such, one of the women group members spoke about her time in the youth movement:

We always knew we had a country we should be concerned about. We’d go around with the Jewish National Fund collection boxes to collect charity donations. During the war we made great efforts; we knew we had to worry about Israel; it was self-evident.

Before emigrating, Israel was perceived as having an exemplary society, the dream to which they were aspiring, so, for example, one of the member described their meeting with the counselors who arrived from Israel, while they attended the preparatory course for immigration: “They were magical in our eyes; they were from ‘there.’” But actually, despite their expectations, even during the early stages, their encounter with the kibbutz did not meet their expectations:

We left Buenos Aires on a ship. We were glad to be setting out on our new path. We were young. It was hard for us to leave our families. I really believed that I’d never see them again ... We sailed ... I remember that there was someone there from Israel and we’d sit together on deck in the evening and he’d tell us about the Land, the kibbutz ... When we neared the Land, I remember that I saw the Haifa coastline and became quite emotional. Maybe I was naïve, but I felt I was standing before my dream come true ... When we arrived, we spent one whole day aboard the ship, because there was a strike and they couldn’t disembark us. I thought someone from the kibbutz would be waiting for us, but that’s not how it was.

²¹ A movie produced by the group members and various writings of theirs were given to the museum at *Beit Hatfutsot*, The Museum of the Jewish People in Ramat Aviv.

²² *Matones*, Spanish for ‘bullies’ or ‘ruffians.’

The next encounter with kibbutz members and the kibbutz is described by the group members, and it is clear they are trying *not* to malign the kibbutz and the Kibbutz Movement for their disappointing, negative first experiences of that encounter. Unlike the lengthy descriptions they had given of their lives in Argentine and even of the prep course and the passage to Israel, now they sufficed to give a brief description of their kibbutz life after their arrival. These stories about the kibbutz included general information, mentioned their military service with great pride, spoke of family status changes, weddings, the births of children, and so on. This long period in their kibbutz lives is described with much less emotion than was found in their descriptions of their colonial lives.

These descriptions of the early stages of their stay in the kibbutz create the clear impression that they had arrived at an ‘anti-home,’ one contrary to the harmonious and natural continuity described by the Zionist ideology of ‘homecoming.’ This first interface between the immigrants and the kibbutz and its members was painful and hard for the group members, and many of them still bear the scars of that meeting. First, the physical reality was far from being as imagined in the diaspora. Unlike the greenery, plentiful water supply and natural scenery from which they had come, they encountered a dry desert. Nonetheless, the most painful part of that encounter was the social aspect. Unlike their imagined ‘Israelis’ and the ‘kibbutzniks’ (i.e., kibbutz members), they had met during their preparation—figures whom they aspired to resemble, often bordering on the supernatural—in actuality, it became clear that the host kibbutz members are, for the most part, unpleasant, hostile and unfriendly towards them. One of the former Argentine women dubbed this a ‘culture clash.’ Moreover, these immigrants were sometimes called ‘Indians,’ a denigrating term for those who identified themselves as Israeli-Zionists. More often than not, they were treated as aliens, patronized, and the ‘senior’ kibbutz members were unpleasant, sometimes described as being rude and even exhibiting aggressiveness in public.

This first encounter was a sign of more hardships to come. The kibbutz society is described by the group members as a totalitarian society that had, for a long time, aggressively, uncompromisingly, and often in a vulgar manner, tried to coerce its members to accept the kibbutz lifestyle. This difficulty was manifested in daily kibbutz life and in the accepted behavioral norms. The main problem described resulted from the kibbutz members’ attempts to erase their past and change their lifestyles and customs. One of the first stages in this coercion process was the demand that the immigrants change their names to Hebrew names, because their Latin names were not considered to be legitimate. The names of all the group members were changed, sometimes to a name unrelated to the original name.

Another crucial point of dispute, the pain of which they still feel in their collective memory today, was with regard to one of the primary indicators of their original homes—their mother tongue. The kibbutz demanded zealously that they live their lives in Hebrew and that it be the only language spoken. The group members were forbidden to speak Spanish, and this ban was strictly upheld; those who spoke in Spanish were ostracized, harshly scolded and treated with hostility. The degree of disgust exhibited regarding conversation in Spanish was attested to by one of the women in the group:

I remember that once we were sitting and talking in Spanish and one of them approached. Sometime they would approach. And he told us: “There are three things I hate.” When we asked what they are, he answered: “Germans, Arabs and Argentines.”

Group members testify that they very much wanted to belong, to become ‘Israelis,’ but their words suggest that, as the years passed, they formed a separate group and refused to join the dominant kibbutz group. In the eyes of the kibbutzniks, they were never considered to be an integral part of the community. At that time, many kibbutz members took the trouble to emphasize the differences between the groups and stressed the fact that the immigrants, being in a separate group, are not part of the kibbutz—making the former Argentines feel strange and rejected.

Such things were manifested also at social ceremonies, at which the immigrants were required to abandon their customs and adopt the kibbutz ones. For instance, one of the women group members relates how the kibbutz dictated to the engaged couple how their wedding would be and would not accept any other customs:

We were the first to marry. The Argentine couples at the wedding wanted to dance with the groom; it’s a dream. One of the ‘seniors’ got up and said: “Impossible!” They specifically stated that there would be no ballroom dancing.²³ We wanted it. What’s wrong with ballroom dancing? We wouldn’t have danced the tango. Until the 1980s, they didn’t allow any dancing at all ... Then, there was a wedding with *horah* [Israeli circle] dances ... This made us very sad. A wedding is something people dream about for a long time and we couldn’t do it properly.

A description rife with events attesting to the mixture of different types of past and meanings within the context of the group members’ narrative, mentioned in the previous section, in the current context, appears below in the words of a group member:

I remember, the moment I arrived, I saw their faces. They reminded me of *matones* from Argentina. Do you know what that is? It’s a term for certain types, murderers, dark characters with these big mustaches, exactly like they had here ... When I’d walk on the sidewalk in Argentina, everyone knew me. I said “Good morning” or “Good evening” to everybody, because I had good manners. Here, people walk past you as if you’re made of air...

The use of the term *matones*, a negative character, later associated with the local Argentine gauchos, indicating those same natives who had attacked the early Jewish settlers, and considered by them to be ‘the others’—points to the severity of the crisis experienced by the group members, who, to some extent, saw the kibbutzniks as ‘the others,’ just as they were viewed by the kibbutzniks. This concept, like other concepts and additional ideas, proves how the connection between two types of past, with which the group members were coping within the context of their collective memory, is not one-directional and incorporates concepts from both types of past. In this case, the Israeli kibbutz members are likened to the native South American Indians during the early Argentine settlement period. The use of the term *matones* to describe

²³ The ban on ballroom dancing, considered to be aristocratic, was part of the kibbutz ideology, and was mentioned in conjunction with a discussion held in the youth movement in Argentina, though this ban was never adopted by the group members.

them turns the tables on the kibbutzniks, who consider themselves to be superior. Apparently, the group members identified some degree of resemblance between these kibbutzniks and the supposedly ‘uncultured’ Argentine natives, who had not succeeded in raising a settlement project nor in developing the Concordia area before the Jewish settlement. Meanwhile, the group members perceived themselves to be the offspring of previous generations of successful settlers, who coped well with the hostile figures, and they are the ones loyal to the real kibbutz values and succeeded even more than their predecessors. In this case, the ‘senior’ kibbutzniks were the ones who had abandoned the right path. One of the group members defined this in the following words: “They call us ‘Indians,’ but I think they’re the Indians.” Similarly, the Jewish settlers in Argentina succeeded where the ‘Indians’ had failed. These group members saw their own success, to a large extent, as a victory over the kibbutznik ‘Indians.’ Thus, for example, one of the members said:

Yes, where was their ideology if not for us? We’re the only kibbutz that still maintains the ideology. We succeeded in changing, but we’re the only kibbutz that hasn’t become capitalistic, one of the only ones that still have a collective dining room and preserve the kibbutz values.

Moreover, in many conversations, the sentiment arose that, despite the perceptions and the aspirations of the group members and their deep connection with the ideology and the place, the kibbutz society did not fully receive them into their midst, although their desire to belong was and still is a central motive of these group members. Thus, for example, one of the group members sadly says: “I’m already talking to my wife in Hebrew, even when we’re alone. Maybe it’s time to stop calling us ‘new immigrants?’”

‘Mixed’ Narratives: The ‘Kibbutzniks’ and the Jewish ‘Gauchos’²⁴

An analysis of the narratives of the group members attests to a synthesis combining the memory arenas into one sequential narrative. The past in the colonies is directly tied to the Israeli settlement and many aspects reflect great loyalty to Zionist-socialist values. The construction of the past along a single continuum provides meaning and continuity to their life-stories and connect the ideas of the past, from the Baron’s colonies, to their present kibbutz life. Within this context, certain similarities, values and ideologies spill over from one hub to another. In this manner, the group members’ narratives express their hybrid identities, the ‘mix’ and integration, to the point of a union between the narratives from the Argentine colony and the contents and ideas drawn from the Zionist-Israeli metanarrative. To some extent, ideas and events from their colonial past become adapted to those worldviews characteristic of the host society during the years of their emigration to Israel and are still perceived by the group members as being important, key components of their life-stories—even though some of these components are no longer ‘sanctified’ as they had been in the past.

This is especially evident in the description of the first Jewish settlers in the Baron’s Argentine colonies, described as exemplary figures, brave and pioneering, often using the same

²⁴ A term used in Argentina in recent decades (Jewish gaucho). Group members do not often use this term perhaps because it is associated with the Argentine culture.

terminology as is used to describe the first settlers in Israel. In the case of Concordia, descriptions of the settlers often begin prior to the arrival of the waves of Jewish immigrants. Settlement attempts prior to the Jewish settlement are described as failures and the Jewish settlers are described as figures who created ‘something out of nothing,’ parallel to some descriptions of the first waves of immigrant settlers in the Land of Israel.

Descriptions of the first stages of the Argentine settlement given by group members tend to stress the values, seemingly taken from Zionist-kibbutz ideology and touting pioneerism, frugality and a life of labor (Almog, 1997). The difficult lifestyle and the natural and environmental disasters in Argentina, recalled time and time again during the conversations, were considered to have been worse than those experienced by the kibbutzniks in Israel, when directly compared. For instance:

They suffer floods and plagues of locusts. Sometimes the locusts ate all that season’s crops and all that had been invested was lost. They were strong people ... Somehow, they managed to survive that year and planted everything anew and carried on ... It was different than here, because here there was State backing.²⁵ There, if there were no crops, there was starvation.

The descriptions given by the settlers resemble those appearing in the Zionist literature on the transformation of the ‘old Jew’ from the ‘degenerate diaspora’ into the ‘new Jew,’ who becomes the master of his/her own destiny. In this context, they stress labor and productivity as supreme values, alongside sublime social values, in a manner that positions them, to a great extent, as being superior to the kibbutzniks, and definitely superior to the present kibbutz members. In this regard, several group members stood out for their distinctly Zionist interpretations of events. Some used to expound at length on practical Zionism, on A. D. Gordon’s perceptions, on Max Nordau, and on other chapters in Zionist ideology. Attempts to minimize the differences between the immigrants to Israel and the immigrants to Argentina, to present them as two sides of the same coin, or, at least, as two close alternatives, were blatant in the discourse, such that, for example, one woman interviewed decided to state:

Know that these were the same people! Where do you suppose the first and second waves of immigrants came from? They came from the same places, chose the same things. I visited the colonies built by Rothschild here in Israel and I was in shock—it’s the same things! The synagogue looks the same, with the same balcony for the women’s section,²⁶ the religious articles are the same ones. Here, Rothschild built and there Hirsch built. The same people, some ended up here, some there.

Within this context, other terms used were ‘landholding’ and ‘pioneers,’ that were not associated with Israeli settlement, but with the first Argentine settlers—an exceptional usage of terminology not found in the Zionist discourse even in regard to life in the diaspora (neither

²⁵ This apparently refers to an Israeli State policy that was valid until the mid-1980s, which gave the kibbutzim benefits and grants, and excused their debts on a regular basis.

²⁶ A description of a typical synagogue in the Argentine colonies and in several settlements in Israel based on an identical architectural plan.

considered as having been ‘pioneering’ nor as reflecting ‘landholding’), generally associated with most parts of the birthplace of the Jewish People in the Land of Israel.

Group members proudly present the developments made in the farmsteads, especially citing the novel, cooperative technique²⁷ first developed by the Jewish settlers. This technique was a sort of cooperative union, creating cooperation and solidarity between the farmsteads, assigned a similar nature in the group members’ stories to that of the kibbutz. For example:

There [in Argentina], there was cooperation between people. The Jews took care of one another ...the settlers founded the cooperatives, like it was here with the [Kibbutz] Movement... They would buy merchandise together at lower prices and plan the crops ... In this way, for example, they built a creamery [i.e., a plant producing sour-cream], to which the milk-producers transferred milk...I can promise you that there were no hungry Jews there; the community wouldn’t allow it to happen.

In this context, note the blatant similarity between the intercolonial farmstead cooperation and that of the kibbutz cooperative, as also expressed by means of the explanation of the events and activities of the colonial cooperative, using kibbutz terminology.

Some members of the group tended to associate certain characteristics of the early settlers with themselves,²⁸ to take on the traits of tough *campo*²⁹ people, like their forefathers, equating the hardships with which their fathers had to cope to their own, and sometimes to those of the kibbutzniks. They, themselves, considered their activities within the youth movement, the ‘fulfillment’ and the personal sacrifices as being: “the spearhead of Zionist activity,” as it was dubbed by one of the group members. When comparing both these societies, the members of the kibbutz and of Israeli society were usually assigned an inferior status.

In regard to the alternative narrative designed by the group members and the way in which they viewed their past and themselves, it is possible to learn from a film they prepared in honor of 40 years to the groups’ immigration (presented before some of the group members at a meeting) that opens as follows:

Listen, children! Lend your ears to a legend that begins somewhere far away in the faint diaspora, in Argentina, a land of plenty, of water and fields, a widespread land with cities and towns. Of the millions of its residents, a small percentage are Jews, and amid this minority, about one quarter consider themselves to be Zionists; a amid that small group, there is a much smaller percentage of activists in the youth movement branches and Zionist clubs in each city and town—a ‘nest’ to which each member belongs, each one

²⁷ This was a union of farmers in the colonies sharing common, cooperative production and commercial goals, in order to increase their efficiency, to strengthen their bargaining leverage, and to utilize the advantage of size. Besides the clear economic advantage, these organizations were also involved in social and cultural activities. Ownership was joint, and the management was based on egalitarian and democratic principles and on the solidarity between friends.

²⁸ A similar phenomenon is mentioned by Nora (2010), who claims that individuals feel they have a personal, familial and national obligation to remember; as such, they often transform the collective memory into their own personal one.

²⁹ In Spanish, *campo* literally means ‘field’, an expression connoting rural villagers, toughened by hard manual labor in the fields.

with a pure Hebrew name: *Ken Mekorot* [the origins nest]; *Ken Lehavot* [the flames nest]; *Ken Hagshamah* [the fulfillment nest] ... [Playing in the background is a tune with the words: "A blue shirt and it's surpassing all the other ornaments."]³⁰

This choice of words nicely reflects the group members' perceptions of themselves; they tend to see themselves as a chosen minority that, despite the plentitude and good life in Argentina, chose the right path to 'fulfillment'—the kibbutz and Zionism. In their eyes, the description of the required sacrifices, made in order to reach the kibbutz (leaving their families, the hard beginnings of the new life, etc.) only further empower their loyalty and commitment to the Zionist path, serving as 'proof' of their being genuine Zionists and Israelis.³¹ In this way, they construct themselves as more loyal Zionists than other groups for whom immigration and Zionism were inevitable, but not freely chosen, as was the case for Argentine immigrants in the late-1970s and early 21st century, who came due to economic and political crises in Argentina—a concept highlighted in many conversations with members of the studied group.

The above descriptions continue a line of thought hinted at in many of the interviews.³² It compares the Argentine colonists at the start of the 19th century with their followers—the present kibbutz and its members, with degenerate values and distance from the socialist ideology and social solidarity. This comparison, usually made indirectly, is a criticism of the kibbutz and, in fact, is a form of protest against the status to which they were assigned within the kibbutz framework. Unlike the images of the group members as 'immigrants' and in contrast to the attitude toward their past as being 'diasporic,' thus placing them in an inferior position as opposed to the kibbutz 'seniors,' their comparison (above) positions their fathers,' and thus their own, pasts and they themselves as being 'more genuine kibbutzniks than the kibbutzniks themselves.' One of the group members aptly stated this idea, suggesting that, in many contexts, he and his father before him had coped with greater hardships than those dealt with by the kibbutz members in the past, and certainly than those they cope with in the present.

Another key advantage associated with the colonial settlers by the group members was their rich culture, beside their modest, non-materialistic lifestyle. The group members describe a spiritual and cultural wealth in the colonies, often directly or indirectly compared with the kibbutzniks, who are not perceived as such. Thus, for instance:

Those Jews [the colonial settlers] were highly cultured. They loved to read books and to hear music. Despite the fact that they had virtually nothing, they would meet in the *salon*,³³ perform plays, discuss their ideologies.

³⁰ The anthem of the Zionist-socialist youth movement—*Hashomer hatzair*—literally, the young guard; the blue shirt was their international uniform.

³¹ The presentation of 'proofs' of belonging attest, to a great extent, that the belonging is not definitive, as discussed at length in the previous section.

³² For instance, not all the words regarding the dangers of famine or relating to the foreign workers, and other such examples, are presented within the limited confines of this short article.

³³ Literally a 'hall' in Spanish; a term referring to the colony's social center, an institution also mentioned in some of the interviews, but as the place where dance parties were held and youth get-togethers.

A similar connection between Israel, working the land, and the settlers, but from a more religious perspective, was claimed by one group member:

Most of the *colonos*³⁴ didn't have any agricultural experience. They didn't always know what to do in the field, but the Baron's actions were logical—After all, what's the Jewish People? What happened in the biblical period? Indeed, we are an agricultural nation. All our holidays are based on agriculture, so it makes sense. This wasn't new to the Jewish People. He didn't make it up; it's a part of us.

In this manner, the kibbutz members related to the past as a single continuum ending in Israel on today's kibbutz. This continuum forms an historic and ideological continuity from the transition from Serbia and Eastern Europe (considered to be the 'real' exile) through the passage to the diasporic Argentine colonies (frequently described as a 'light' diaspora, reflecting the kibbutz), and until the 'natural' transition to fulfillment on the kibbutz in the ancient homeland. This sequence is entirely different from the sequence suggested by Zionism. The Argentine continuum does not transform the colonies into a meaningless, uninteresting exile, but rather makes them paragons to be ideologically emulated for their pioneerism, work ethic and successful coping with hardships. Following this approach, today's kibbutzniks, who suppress 'yesterday' and, to a certain extent, the present—do not reach the level, toughness and commitment of the people in the colonies. This, in the eyes of the group members (and hopefully also in the eyes of others, especially their offspring), they have reversed the balance of power within the narrative, positioning themselves at a much higher status than that assigned to them by the kibbutz. This status distinguishes them from other immigrant groups, whom they perceive to have inferior social values, such as Argentine immigrants from Buenos Aires or former-Soviet immigrants, whom they believe have immigrated not out of a pioneer spirit or due to ideological beliefs, but for lack of other options.

The integration of different types of past is most significant with regard to belonging. Belonging to the Zionist project is not merely a social matter, but has a central place in the worldviews of the group members. Therefore, the resultant synthesis between types of past dulls the differences between them by softening certain contexts, breaking dichotomies, and creating an ideational continuum, often even a unification between the colonial settlements and life in Israel. Definitions of 'seniority' are unsettled within the context of the Zionist mission and its deeds, thus challenging this central element in the formulation of social status in Zionist society (Almog, 1997). The colonial past is conscripted as part of the 'senior' status of the group members, positioning them in their collective memory as 'seniors' in the settlement, as opposed to the 'new immigrant' thrust upon them by the kibbutz.

³⁴ The common Spanish term for the pioneer settlers (Jews and non-Jews) in the Argentine frontiers. This term was uncommon in the discourse of the kibbutz members, unlike the Jewish and non-Jewish discourse in Argentina. It is possible that this difference stems from the significant differences in the meaning of this term across societies and languages. While in Spanish, this means 'settlers' and is a positive and legitimate term indicating pioneerism and primacy, in the Israeli discourse, the term 'coloniality' has negative connotations, related to issues of colonialism and the legitimacy of settlement—concepts rejected by the Zionist mainstream, that does not perceive itself as being colonialistic (not in the sense of the settlement of foreigners in a foreign land, utilizing it for their own needs), but rather returning the People of Israel to their historic birthright.

Summary and Conclusions

The members of the researched group had immigrated to Israel on the basis of Zionist ideology that had constructed the State of Israel as their ancient homeland and them as pioneers ‘coming home.’ Their aspiration was to be a part of the building of the renewed Jewish homeland. Their encounter with their ‘home’ in Israel did not match the construct of their dreams. This complex intercultural encounter and the demands to abandon their rich and dear cultural ‘baggage’ created a conflict between the desires of the studied group members—to keep their original identities and cultures or to integrate and belong. The power of this conflict grew within the kibbutz social context during the period under investigation, when strong commitment and radical ideology still permeated most areas in an individual’s life. This charged encounter created a complex give-and-take, during which the collective memory of the group members was forged.

During the early stages, the kibbutz society left little room for negotiation, uncompromisingly enforcing their perceptions and ideas. The ‘diasporic’ past of the group members, so highly regarded in their land of origin, was considered illegitimate by the host society. Moreover, in the present case, Baron Hirsch’s organized Argentine colonies disrupted Israel’s exclusivity, as the Jewish national homeland, one of the basics in the Zionist ethos. Not only did the pasts of the group members appear negative to the Israeli hosts, but they seemed even more negative than those of other immigrant groups—as the antithesis of Zionism.

Even with their being kept apart and their disappointment with the kibbutz encounter, these group members strove to integrate into kibbutz society and to become Israelis. This wish was not merely the result of the kibbutz’s demands. Separatism was counter to the aspirations, ideologies, and perceptions of the group members. Their desire to belong formed the main axis of their worldview. Even today, these group members do not enjoy a sense of complete belonging. They still want to prove they belong to the groups, ‘Israelis’ and ‘kibbutzniks,’ and to receive recognition for their contributions to the significant development of the kibbutz, which plays an important role in the field, by altering the way in which the group members express their collective memory.

Halbwachs (1992) claimed the past is always fashioned according to present needs, while the collective memory helps to strengthen a group identity, relative of that of other groups. In light of present needs, the group members recruited their unique past in the Argentine agricultural colonies and fashioned them to assist them in improving their status in the new society. In this context, and within the framework of the negotiations regarding the past, and as part of the politics of memory, the group members framed their past in the Baron’s colonies in a way that would neither contradict the Zionist mission in Israel, nor kibbutz settlement—and on one continuum with general Zionism. Then, the group members sought symbols valued in Israeli and kibbutz societies. According to Linde (2000), each individual assigns a different meaning to events from the past as a function of the present circumstances and new events; the collective narrative is the result of a dialogue with other voices and texts. In the present case, perceptions of the present and the demands of the new society with which the group members wish to identify themselves brought about their claiming ‘ownership’ of certain events originating in the colonies, while altering their ‘original’ symbolic significance and integrating them into the dominant Israeli collective memory. In this manner, they created a contentual continuum between the past and the present (pioneerism, sacrifice, determination, ‘landholding,’ the work ethic, and so forth) and an ideational continuum (Zionism, Zionist action, Argentina as a

'temporary stop en route', etc.), while stressing additional similarities (the active figures, their origins, etc.). As such, the Argentine group utilized the dominant memory patterns to tell another story—a competing one.

During the construction of the collective memory, the politics of memory and its agents used the collective memory to position the group members in the kibbutz's present and to seek a senior status within the kibbutz framework, while appealing the status assigned by the dominant metanarrative. This social construction is based on the social hierarchies, which are, in turn, based on seniority in the country and the contribution to its development. In the kibbutz's worldview, the association of basic values with the colonies prior to the settlement in the Land of Israel gave the group members a position of seniority, placing them even higher up in the kibbutz hierarchy than the kibbutz 'seniors.' The construction of their colonial past as having been idyllic, and in many ways valuable, more so than that of the kibbutz, certainly more so than the past of the currently disintegrating kibbutz, strengthened the perceptions of their seniority. This approach stripped away the native-born (*sabra*) kibbutz members' exclusivity regarding the glorification of their past and creating a competing past, no less magnificent. As such, the past is transformed into a resource providing legitimacy, recognition and status from the kibbutz, and doing so without erasing their past and while preserving the memory of their land of origin.

The abandonment of socialist values by many and the reduced dominance of the Zionist ethos in Israeli society (Ohana & Wistrich, 1996), as well as the loss of values in the kibbutz—all these, to some extent, stand opposed to the group members adherence to the collective memory and those values. It seems this adherence, while an outcome of the generational nature of collective memory (Schuman & Scott, 1989), is a result of the will to construct a successful and significant life-story. Abandonment of the Zionist path and of basic values that had guided central decisions in their lives might pull the proverbial rug out from under their feet, leaving them without their primary motivating force and might harm the significance they assign to their immigration narrative and the consequential sacrifices. Thus, the Argentine group members refuse to abandon their ideological path, despite the changes in Israeli society. The adherence to these values is, to a great extent, also a criticism of the Israeli and the kibbutz societies that did abandon their values and strayed from 'the right path.'

The abandonment of values by kibbutz society positioned the group members in their own collective memory as Zionists even more loyal than the kibbutzniks and the *sabras*—because they had not abandoned the ideological path. This fact supports their new status, as opposed to that of the kibbutz seniors; unlike the kibbutz seniors, the group members are 'real' Zionists, toughened people of the *campo*, continuing in the path of their fathers, whose beginnings were not in the kibbutz framework, but rather in the Baron's colonies. This narrative positions them, to a great extent, in their own eyes, as being 'more genuine kibbutzniks than the kibbutzniks themselves.' In this context and from a preferred position, these group members criticize kibbutz society, past and present, by expressing their objections to parts of the lifestyle and by taking upon themselves a significant part of the design and development of the nature of the kibbutz today. In this way, the group members are constructing life-story of success and significance, which helps them to justify their sacrifices and the abandonment of their childhood provinces, culture and beloved families in the Baron's colonies. As such, this research shows how even memory-building ideologies are open to give-and-take and may be 'claimed' and 'owned' by weak groups.

The present research dealt with the connections between emigration, intercultural transition, and collective memory while focusing on the uniqueness of the construction of the collective memory in this situation. These connections make the politics of memory in the present field unique because the memory community and its memory agents are coping with different types of past and their connection. The movement between these types of past, the connection between them, and coping with the ongoing scrutiny of one culture of the concepts in the other culture, and vice versa, attest to the fact that the collective memory is part of an ongoing process of social construction (Halbwachs, 1992). The complexity of this collective memory, moving through different types of past, different cultures and meanings, shows how this group is exceptional, falling outside narrow theoretical or categorical definitions³⁵ and outside narrow or static definitions of nationalism; it provides a hybrid arena in which cultures and identities mix. The entirety of the groups' narratives reflect the complex dynamics that, as a whole, fashion its image.

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³⁵ As in the approaches of Safran (1991) and Shabal (2000).

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About the Author

Yaakov M. Bayer (ymebayer@gmail.com) is a lecturer at Ariel University. He holds a doctorate in economics from Ben-Gurion University. He is the Chief Financial Officer of Beer-sheva mental health center. Yaakov researches health economics and behavioral economics with an emphasis on the connections between culture, religion, beliefs, and economics. In addition, Yaakov explores the Jewish communities in South America and how they structured their collective memory. Yaakov is a member of the Executive Committee and chairman of the Negev branch of the Israeli Genealogical Society.

Discussion Questions

1. Do collective memories act as the instruments of social cohesion and stability, or do they help to instigate change from “above,” or are they meant to legitimize the identities of the disenfranchised and bring about change from “below”?
2. Is “homecoming” a more complex process, compared to emigrating to a new place with no imaginary past?
3. Under what conditions are memory-building ideologies open to give-and-take within the weak groups of society?
4. How does the era of social networking, accelerate the design of more diverse narratives, and how does it make them more dynamic?

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Recuperating Ethnic Identity through Critical Genealogy

Christine Scodari
Florida Atlantic University

Abstract

In concurring with the Global Family Reunion's (2015) perspective that genealogy as a locus of representation and action has the potential to serve counter-hegemonic ends, this article identifies frequent pitfalls related to race and ethnicity in family history texts and practices and outlines recuperative strategies for addressing them. Citing, but moving beyond, prior investigation of an array of identity issues, mostly in genealogy-themed television (see Scodari, 2013), the study applies critical race, postcolonial, and other critical theory to textual and ethnographic data drawn from genealogy and genetic ancestry narratives in traditional and digital/social media, readings and interpretations of audiences/participants, and other family history practices. Ultimately, it succeeds in laying a foundation for specific proposals critically addressing race and ethnicity in genealogy related discourses, practices, and affordances of digital media.

Keywords: genealogy, family history, race, ethnicity, genetic ancestry, media studies, cultural studies

Introduction

In 2015, journalist and founder A. J. Jacobs held the first Global Family Reunion in New York City with the intention of highlighting the interrelatedness of the wider human family, in part through establishment of a *global* family tree linking trees posted on various websites. For two decades, the media have noted the increasing numbers of persons fashioning family trees prompted by, among other things, the aging of baby boomers, a "sense of mortality" (Wee, 1997, p. A1), a "proliferation of Internet genealogy sites," and a "growing pride in ethnicity" (Shute, 2002, p. 76). After completion of the mapping of the human genome in 2003, genetic ancestry services also arose, offering stimulating, intriguing, but contentious complements to family history texts and practices, particularly when it comes to race and ethnicity.

Some critique genealogy as a limiting, “naval-gazing” pursuit devoted to, as Saar (2002) cautions, “your own culture, your milieu, your family, your genus” (p. 236). It could preclude a critical posture—an ability to individuate, understand, and cultivate compassion and action in response to the struggles of others. In suggesting that one cannot fully appreciate an individual genealogy without positioning it within a constellation of peoples, eras, and events, the Global Family Reunion stimulates critical possibilities. Labrador and Chilton (2009) attest that genealogy is not only “individualized . . . but immersed in the social concepts of geography, demography, citizenship, ethnicity, tourism, and diasporic movements” and, thus, “can be elitist and exclusionary, and/or democratic and inclusionary” (pp. 5-6). Moreover, Kuhn (2002) argues that family reminiscences and artifacts allow one to “explore connections between ‘public’ historical events, structures of feeling, family dramas, relations of class, national identity and gender, and ‘personal’ memory” (p. 5). Two questions arise. How can genealogy texts, services, and practices facilitate intercultural connection and inclusion? Where race and ethnicity are concerned, what are the common pitfalls and how might these texts, services, and practices address them?

In this context, the titular expression “recuperating ethnic identity” has two meanings: (1) Acquiring new information and insights concerning one’s own racial or ethnic background that illuminate previous and ongoing struggles; and (2) Interrogating one’s racial or ethnic identifications, uncovering contextual correspondences with other groups, and cultivating understanding of *their* historical and/or current circumstances. While a critical genealogy requires both recuperations, those who currently navigate racial or ethnic minority status engage in the first recuperation daily. For others whose ethnic background does not require sustained negotiation, this recuperation requires new or renewed effort. However, the second recuperation demands such effort of all participants in genealogy culture.

This essay cites but proceeds beyond previous research that considers various aspects of identity, especially documentary television series that genealogically profile celebrity or non-celebrity guests (see Scodari, 2013). Focusing on race and ethnicity and applying critical race, postcolonial, and other critical theory, this study considers these and other traditional and digital media narratives relating to genealogy and genetic ancestry.¹ It also scrutinizes responses of participants and other practices, such as DNA testing for so-called “ethnic ancestry.” It draws upon my auto-ethnographic experiences in recuperating my ethnic identity through engagements in/with genealogy websites, DNA testing, family interactions, and family history travel.² As a work of critical media and cultural studies, it taps into interdisciplinary domains such as American, memory, kinship, migration, and heritage studies, as well as disciplines of sociology, education, anthropology, history, genetics, and geography. Finally, the essay sets a trajectory for addressing race and ethnicity in family history texts, practices, and the genealogy- and genetic ancestry-related affordances of digital media. In doing so, it demonstrates that practicing a critical, “alternate roots” genealogy could theoretically be a conduit for illuminating parallels between and among the histories and/or ongoing struggles of diverse groups.

Hegemonic Pitfalls

In *Family Trees*, François Weil’s American history of genealogy, the author acknowledges that genealogy has been viewed not only as a “goal in itself,” or as a “means for economic, moral, or religious results or benefits,” but also as a way to establish “individual and collective identities”

(prologue, para. 5). However, advancing from personal to collective identity is only one step in the direction of a critical genealogy; recognizing correspondences between one's own collectives and those of others, often separated by time, space, class, and/or race/ethnicity is, perhaps, the most illuminating and challenging. Acknowledging such affinities while still recognizing distinctions pertaining to specific identities and contexts is harder yet.

Some scholars gesture toward genealogy's critical potential. Saar (2002) maintains that genealogy becomes influential "when it turns to objects whose meaning and validity is affected by revealing their historicity" (p. 233). Sleeter (2008) highlights race in considering how genealogy might facilitate understanding within her discipline of education, suggesting that white educators probe their family histories in order to engage in "critical analysis of their own lives, examining themselves as culturally and historically located beings" (p. 121). Standing in the way of such possibilities, however, are hegemonic perils that involve race, or ethnicity, or both.

"Me-too-ism" and "Me-and-not-them-ism"

Before showing how she critically positioned herself in doing her own genealogy, Sleeter (2008) cautions, echoing Aveling's (2001) definition of "me-too-ism" (p. 43), that whites can be "uncritically . . . ethnic in response to the identity work of people of color" in failing to grasp, for instance, that all experiences of racial or ethnic prejudice are not equal (Sleeter, p. 115). Structural and ongoing discrimination in the immediate context warrants special regard. According to previous (see Scodari, 2013) and ongoing investigation, "me-too-ism" is not an instantly apparent hazard on documentary television series that present genealogical profiles. There is no give-and-take between or among the profiled persons or cross-referencing within the profile narratives. This feature is still hegemonic, however, as it tends to level the playing field and communicate that, overall, each group's history is worthy of equal emphasis. While audiences can discern differences through consistent viewing, the lack of explicit contrast and comparison contributes to the leveling process. However, neglecting to note appropriate parallels among the various histories, such as the ways in which the same or similar public responses or policies might have shaped the experience of more than a single group, can shut down opportunities to acknowledge distinctions as well.

Host Henry Louis Gates, Jr., Harvard literature professor, kicks off PBS's first family history profile program of the new millennium, *African American Lives* (2/1/2006), from Ellis Island, noting that this historic site for numerous immigrant groups fails to provide genealogy answers for many other Americans (see Scodari, 2013). With this contrast made, and two series devoted to the explicitly described, unique histories and genealogical challenges of African Americans (*African American Lives II* followed in 2008), the third and fourth Gates-hosted profile series, *Faces of America* (PBS, 2010) and its tubular descendant, *Finding Your Roots* (PBS, 2012), explore various ethnic and racial groups in America. While viewers might discern divergences based on profiles of persons of various ethnicities, the explicit contrasts made in shows or segments dealing with African Americans are largely absent.

As I engaged in auto-ethnographic analysis of my own genealogical journey, an incident occurred that illustrates the significance of the "me-too-ism" pitfall and an even more hegemonic variation. One morning, I chatted with another patron as we awaited the opening of our local Family History Center (see Scodari, 2013). She was researching her Irish heritage and expressed surprise at the hardships her ancestors faced after arriving in the U.S. Had we not been of the

same (privileged) race, this could have been a “me-too-ism” moment. However, I made an association with my immigrant forebears from Italy and opined that newcomers “get a raw deal even now.” The woman grimaced at the second claim and answered: “Well, I wouldn’t say now.” Of course, I cannot be sure that she was thinking primarily of immigrants of non-European origin, but since current controversies mostly reference groups of color and, when it comes to our mutual stomping ground of South Florida, Latin Americans and Haitians, it is a logical assumption. Therefore, she was not engaging in “me-too-ism” but, even more problematically, in “me-and-not-them-ism.” She was also coming from a post-racial orientation.

Post-racial and Post-ethnic Orientations

Post-racial and other “post-” orientations, which overlook the effects of past oppression, or deny oppression in the present, or both, can disrupt critical sense making in genealogical texts and practices. Scholars characterize post-racism as the “continued centrality of race within this ideology where race is ostensibly immaterial” (Joseph, 2011, p. 521). Ono (2010) intersects post-racism with post-class, contending that it “reproduces the age-old mythology . . . that by pulling oneself up by one’s bootstraps, working hard, acting ethically, playing fair, and not asking for help it is possible to achieve the American dream” (p. 229).

Most genealogy series profile the transcendent celebrity and, hence, privilege “post-” orientations automatically. Viewers can rationalize that prior offenses against a celebrity’s group were readily surmountable. After all, if the successful entertainer/athlete/writer, etc., could do it, why not everyone? On *Faces of America* (2/10/2010), Kristi Yamaguchi learns more about the reprehensible internment of her forebears during World War II (see Scodari, 2013). She confirms that, as a Japanese American with an Olympic gold medal in women’s figure skating, she failed to garner as many endorsement offers as white gold medalists in her event. However, Gates’ introductory bio has already depicted her as unfailingly successful and preeminent in her field.

Shows that profile average people such as BYUtv’s *The Generations Project* (2010-2012) and PBS’s newest family history series, *Genealogy Roadshow* (2014-present), do not make advances on this score. The former, out of Brigham Young University, was under the auspices of the Latter Day Saints (“Mormon”) church, which encourages interest in family history and collects resources to aid practitioners because of its belief that followers cannot unite with non-Mormon ancestors in paradise without identifying them for posthumous baptism into the church (see Otterstrom, 2008). BYUtv’s slogan, that it “helps you see the good in the world,” and the church’s previous history of racial exclusions (see Goodstein, 2011) may automatically engender post-orientations. An example noted in an earlier analysis (see Scodari, 2013) is its profile of Roi (11/21/2011), an African American distressed by historic and ongoing racism. In the end, after learning how relatives weathered discrimination, Roi helps white families rebuild after a tornado. The profile’s post-racial takeaway is that Roi, as he puts it, “sweat out the anger.” *Genealogy Roadshow* answers family history questions for several average persons an episode, but usually about a connection to a celebrated event, family, or person. Consequently, neither of these “regular folks” programs substantially repudiates the post-racial tendencies of the celebrity profile series.

In fact, in terms of the immigration of racial/ethnic/national groups, its root causes, and its aftermaths, *Faces of America* and *Finding Your Roots* ignore or downplay certain histories involving racial or ethnic strife. As prior (see Scodari, 2013) and continuing exploration

demonstrate, my own ethnicity is a case in point. *Faces of America* profiles Italian-American Chef Mario Batali in an episode featuring the “Century of Immigration” ending in 1924 (2/17/2010). Guided by Gates, Batali mentions two ancestral locations in the north-central region of Tuscany and another in southern Italy, which Italians refer to as the *Mezzogiorno* (“midday”). However, the fact that the massive Italian diaspora of this period mostly involved destitute, racialized Italians from the south escapes attention (see Mangione & Morreale, 1992; Moe, 2006; Aprile, 2011). Such racialization stems, in part, from the proximity of southern Italy to North Africa and the Middle East. While the program’s parallel profiles of Irish-American comic/talk host Stephen Colbert (2/17/2010) and Jewish/Eastern-European-American writer/director Mike Nichols (2/10/2010) detail the religious, economic, ethnic, or national circumstances of their migrant ancestors, Batali, Gates, and genealogy TV in general are scrupulously neglectful of the roots of Italian immigration. In fact, Batali wonders aloud why so many left behind “the idyllic world of Italy” where, he asserts, poverty is scarce.

Other profile series follow suit. On *Who Do You Think You Are?* (NBC, 2010-2012; TLC, 2013-present), three Italian Americans with discernible roots in the *Mezzogiorno*, actors Steve Buscemi (3/25/2011), Edie Falco (4/6/2012), and Ashley Judd (4/8/2011), follow a non-Italian lineage. Visiting ancestral spots in central and northern Italy are four Italian Americans, actors Marisa Tomei (2/10/2013), Valerie Bertinelli (8/13/2015), Brooke Shields (4/2/2010), and Susan Sarandon (4/23/10), the latter of whom has southern roots that remain unexplored. *Finding Your Roots* fares a bit better in profiling Chef Tom Colicchio (10/21/14) and comic/talk host Jimmy Kimmel (1/26/16), superficially citing their southern heritage without scrutinizing it in terms of the unification of Italy in the mid-1800s or the racialized, subaltern status of southerners. The programs largely avoid visits to southern Italy. The Colicchio profile alludes to racism against Italians in the U.S. but, in general, the programs reflect a northern Italian bias replicating, but never elucidating, a major, racially tinged dividing line that helped form the Italian diaspora.

One encompassing problem is that the programs fail to explain the 1924 cutoff for the immigrant influx (see Scodari, 2013). In that year, Congress passed the Johnson Reed Act, which reduced immigration from southern and eastern Europe to a trickle and proscribed Asian immigration entirely. Underplaying such histories disables the family historian from appropriately contextual consideration of ongoing immigration matters, even if they involve a particularized set of issues and a new constellation of racial, ethnic, national, or religious groups.

These programs’ treatment of Asian Americans, Latinos, and others conveniently bypasses immigration controversies. *Who Do You Think You Are?* fails to profile anyone of Hispanic or Asian heritage until its 2015 season. The eventual profiles of Honduran-American actor America Ferrera (4/12/15) and Chinese-American journalist/talk host Julie Chen (3/8/15), and *Finding Your Roots*’ profile of Mexican-American Chef Aarón Sánchez (10/21/14) sidestep the opportunity to confront racial aspects of immigration by focusing on personal stories of ancestors who preceded migrant progenitors. Profiles of Mexican-American actor Eva Longoria and Chinese-American cellist Yo-Yo Ma on *Faces of America* (2/24/10) illustrate other tendencies that bypass thorny issues involving race (see Scodari, 2013). While it is critical to show that Mexicans were settled for centuries on what are now U.S. lands, focusing primarily on Hispanics with long histories in the U.S. does little to mediate issues attendant to the ongoing arrival of Latin-American (and other) migrants. This series also profiles cellist Yo-Yo Ma to gauge the Chinese-American experience. Unlike most Chinese in the U.S., Ma was a prodigy born in Paris whose family came to the U.S. in the 1960s, *Finding Your Roots* later profiles Chef Ming Tsai

(10/21/14) and architect Maya Lin (2/3/16). All these profiles avoid mention of the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, which barred the Chinese from immigrating or naturalizing. It remained in force until after China entered World War II against Japan—after which Ma, Tsai, and Lin’s forebears migrated to U.S. shores.

Racialization

Murji and Solomos (2005) view racialization as the “processes by which ideas about race are constructed, come to be regarded as meaningful, and are acted upon . . .” (p. 1). Racialization assumes that racial categories are fashioned socially and communicatively. If not handled carefully, however, this perspective can become a pitfall. Watts (2010) expresses a common concern, arguing that this social-constructionist view can miss that “[t]ropes of ‘race’ do indeed have a signification system that is textual and material—coded into the institutions we inhabit and the social relations regulated by them” (pp. 217-218).

Hybridity

Recognizing hybridity, or what Hall (1990) describes as “ruptures and discontinuities” in identification, is necessary to evaluate the racial/ethnic implications of genealogy texts and practices (p. 225). Hall isolates diasporic identity as a specific, resistive posture. Tyler (2005) avers that acknowledging mixed-race identity through genealogy automatically disturbs an “essentialist folk conception of racial difference” (p. 1). Many views related to hybridity gesture toward making connections not only between identities but also between localized findings and broader contexts. However, while Squires (2010) agrees that hybridity carries oppositional potential, she also recognizes that it is “neither guaranteed nor the only possibilities that may emerge” (p. 211). This caution allows one to uncover booby traps bound up in the rejection of hybridity, and those stemming from its supposed acceptance.

For example, episodes of *Faces of America* (2/24/2010; 3/3/2010) featuring Eva Longoria reveal hybridity in terms of her DNA test for so-called “ethnic ancestry,” which proved controversial on a blog devoted to Latinas (see Miller, 2010). Such “autosomal” or “admixture” tests examine ancestry informative markers (AIMS) and compare them to AIMS prevalent in populations around the globe. Her test reflected 3% African, 70% European (from the Spanish), and 27% Native American heritage. Some participants selectively took issue with the 3% African background. Although Gates states in the episode that the African segment is likely due to the historic presence of African slaves in Mexico, several blog respondents were certain that this DNA must point to the Moorish, North African presence in Spain. One user characterized North Africans as essentially “Caucasian.” Others were more frank about their (suspiciously motivated) disbelief: “I honestly think it has been tampered with, she doesn’t have African DNA.”

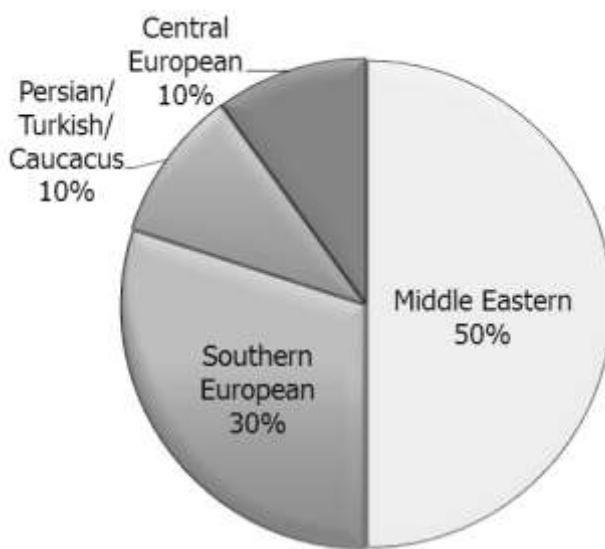
The various affinities, strictly speaking, do not stand in for socially constructed racial categories. However, by employing continental designations or terms similar to “ethnic ancestry” to label or market the test, and being otherwise unclear about what the test really means, genealogy TV and testing providers are party to the problem. A blurb on the *Family Tree DNA* website advertising its autosomal service touts it thusly: “Our Family Finder also has a component called myOrigins. This component gives you a breakdown of your ethnic makeup by percent”

(Autosomal tests, para. 4). According to Nash (2004), geneticists who “repeat the argument that genetic research dispels the myth of pure, discrete ‘races’” but fail to “acknowledge the implications of newly constructed genetic kinship for existing social relations” also bear responsibility (p. 15). While the tests may evince a hybrid racial identity, the risk of racist reception or manipulation is a significant pitfall. On social media, for example, racists often make (fraudulent) use of genetic science (see, for example, ItalianBrownSkin, 2011).

When it comes to autosomal testing, adjusting categories to make results more racially palatable to the majority can be another danger. Figure 1 illustrates the first autosomal results I received from AncestryDNA, the testing firm associated with Ancestry.com. Given what I had learned about my southern Italian roots, the Middle Eastern affinities were, to me, unremarkable.

I did not expect a recalibration of results that took place a couple of years later. Results of such tests can vary by the use of divergent sets or numbers of AIMS, or of AIMS reflecting differing numbers of generations into the past. They can also disagree because of dissimilar classification schemes, as providers can socially construct them, too. My autosomal categories and percentages became, and are as of this writing, as follows: 70% European (64% Italy/Greece, 2% Iberian Peninsula, 2% Ireland; 1% England, and >1% European Jewish); 30% West Asian (25% Near East, 5% Caucasus). According to an accompanying map, the Near East category subsumes Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Iran, Turkey, Syria, and parts of Egypt—inclusions which help to reconcile the new results with the old. “Italy/Greece” had also apparently gobbled up some of the Middle Eastern category, possibly via the logic that the genetics of Italians and Greeks automatically include Middle Eastern affinities. However, because most people understand “Italy/Greece” to be part of Europe, customers who so identify need not confront a large slice of Middle Eastern pie on their pie chart. This shows how providers might be able to reshuffle categories in order to minimize racially underpinned reactions from some majority consumers.

Figure 1: First results from AncestryDNA



Critics allude to a related hybridity hazard. Valdivia (2011), warns that we “need to explore the gains and losses incurred in cultural and population mixtures rather than acritically celebrate mixture, as commodity culture urges us to do” (para. 5). In other words, employing

mixed race identity for fetishistic, commercial ends can bolster existing power hierarchies. For instance, an episode of HBO's mockumentary sitcom *Family Tree* (5/19/2013) satirizes the shallow embrace of hybrid identity in family history texts and practices. In researching his genealogy, half-Irish Brit Tom Chadwick (Chris O'Dowd) finds a photo of the grandfather he never knew. Perplexingly, his appearance and garb suggest that he is "Chinese." Tom's father (Michael McKean) is confident this is not the case, remarking that blue eyes can skip a generation but not "Chinesity." In contrast, a friend implies that family traits are as much cultural as biological and not always passed on: "My great-grandfather was German but you don't see me annexing countries." No matter, Tom discovers that his forebear was a small-time actor, in this instance portraying Nanki-Poo, the male lead in the "Japanese" cast of characters from Gilbert and Sullivan's operetta *The Mikado*. Lin (2007) writes that *The Mikado* is a "biting satire lampooning British government and society" and, elaborating Said's (1978) orientalism thesis, remarks that "the Orient" has historically existed in the European (and Western) mind mainly in the form of an oppositional otherness" used to justify western colonialism (para. 2). This, Lin explains, grounds recent protests against the operetta. *Family Tree*'s satirical take on the fascination around the prospect of mixed heritage—in this case, the Chadwicks' reaction to the possibility of "Chinesity" in the family and attendant conflation of Asian cultures—observes that when whites encounter multicultural ancestry on genealogy TV, narratives can cross lines between complexity and caricature, esteem and fetishization. The ancestor in question may never be historically and culturally situated and may operate as a token or team mascot signifying Western exceptionalism or the profiled person's (or audience member's) self-congratulatory open-mindedness.

Inferential Racism

Hall (2011) defines inferential racism as "those apparently naturalized representations of events and situations relating to race . . . which have racist premis[es] and propositions inscribed in them . . ." (p. 83). The inferentially racist media trope of the white savior serves to "resituate whiteness as progressive and heroic" (Ono, 2010, p. 228). On *Finding Your Roots* (4/8/2012; see Scodari, 2013), after the profile of actor Kyra Sedgwick reveals that the esteemed Sedgwicks of Massachusetts once owned slaves, the family patriarch anxiously asserts the family's subsequent enlightenment and displays a household portrait of Elizabeth Freeman, a freed slave who worked for the family and is buried on its estate.

Kinship

Attitudes regarding kinship can also facilitate hegemonic meanings in texts and practices of family history. Kramer (2001) concludes that the "genealogical imaginary . . . functions as a tool through which the ties of kinship can be both acknowledged and disavowed" (p. 393). Here, she assumes that culture holds sway over biological determinism. However, a leaked email authored by Henry Louis Gates, Jr. revealed that discovery of a slave-owning ancestor so mortified actor Ben Affleck that he asked Gates to leave it out of his 2014 *Finding Your Roots* profile (Alexander, 2015). Apparently, producers acquiesced.

A related peril is defining kinship as fundamentally genetic. The very title, *Who do You Think You Are?*, implies that your gene-alogy is who you are. DNA testing providers also play off

this fundamentalist view, as evidenced in TV ads for AncestryDNA. One proclaims that the test will “answer, once and for all, what it is that makes you, you” and another depicts a man who trades his *Lederhosen* for a kilt when a DNA test exposes that he is Scottish and not German. Nash (2004) questions the “implications of newly constructed genetic kinship for existing social relations” (p. 15) and Lee (2012) recounts a case in which DNA testing invalidated an immigrant’s fatherly status, dooming his petition to have his sons join him in the U.S. She maintains that genetic notions of kinship cannot appreciate how people “understand their attachments to one another” (para. 3), and this would include those across racial and ethnic lines.

Critical Trajectories

With common pitfalls catalogued, the essay outlines recuperative prescriptions pertaining to race and ethnicity in genealogy texts and practices. Prescriptions consider various characteristics or affordances of relevant media narratives, websites and other genealogy research services, genetic ancestry discourses, and supplementary family history practices.

In particular regard to digital media, Barry Wellman’s (2002) conception of networked individuals who “switch rapidly between . . . social networks to obtain information, collaboration, orders, support, sociability and a sense of belonging” offers an over-arching context (p. 16). Networked individualism alters notions of community and family. Rainie and Wellman (2012) claim that devotion to “densely knit family” has given way to “far-flung, less tight, more diverse personal networks” (chap. 1, sec. 2, para. 1). However, this draws in “far-flung” and non-genetic family, too, which can facilitate and even liberate genealogy. Rainie and Wellman entertain networked individualism’s capacity for social change, but mostly render it in ideologically neutral terms. Here, the previously delineated theories and concepts serve to “criticalize” the paradigm.

Understand Race Constructively

Understanding race as a social construction is vital to *constructively* understanding race. While minimizing structural and material urgencies can impair such a perspective as Watts (2010) asserts, it is plausible to hold a social-constructionist view while demonstrating, as I endeavor to do in my teaching, that “social constructions have consequences!” I explain to students that this is why I have lived with the privilege of a white Italian American while the majority of my southern Italian progenitors experienced no such privilege. I add that Americans would consider Jorge Mario Bergoglio, who became Pope Francis, to have been a racially unprivileged Latin American from Argentina, while his family’s northern Italian homeland conferred racial privilege on his progenitors. Given such examples, students interpret racial groupings as neither biological nor fixed and, so long as “me-too-ism” and, especially, “me-and-not-them-ism” are avoided, ongoing, structural exigencies prioritized, and racialization processes recognized, this facilitates understanding of their own family histories and struggles as well as those of others. While today’s multiracial context for immigration demands specifically tailored theories (see Spickard, 2007), Alba and Nee (1997) argue against imposing “contemporary racial perceptions on the past” (p. 845). Indeed, it is counterproductive to ignore the “ebb and flow of racializing discourses” that reveal the constructedness of racial classifications (Scodari, 2013, p.

216). Such revelation helps stimulate the forging of empathetic connections. In *Faces of America*'s profile of Queen Noor (2/17/2010; see Scodari), the American woman who married King Hussein of Jordan and converted to Islam, Gates expresses surprise at the positive press received by her Syrian father's family. "The Irish were demeaned in the press," he quips. Noor's sharp-witted rejoinder, "like we are now," is mindful of racialization's fickle character.

Subsequent to the Batali profile on *Faces of America* (2/17/2010), viewers noted oversights on PBS's forum (*Faces of America* with Henry Louis Gates, Jr.). One wrote: "My main reason for replying here is to ask those who still have no answer for 'Why They Came' to research the history . . . especially for the South of Italy, starting in the mid-1800s." Another offered a fair critique but, perhaps, in "me-too-ist" fashion: "Many other profiles admit discrimination and yet this is largely left out where it pertains to olive skin." Taking exception, a third declared: "My entire family is blond . . . We are from northern Italy . . . The dark olive skinned . . . stereotype is more common in southern Italy where it is more rural, uneducated and where the Mafia was born." This elicited annoyance: "Simply because someone made an erroneous assumption about what Italians should look like doesn't give you the right to imply that if you look stereotypically Italian and are from central or southern Italy you're stupid and a criminal." The exchange enacts racially inflected, historic tensions between northern and southern Italy that are a taboo subject on genealogy TV, which is inclined to buttress post-orientations. It also reveals race-based colorism *within* a racial category, something that informs the critical chronicling of family history. In an episode of *Finding Your Roots* (5/20/2012), Latinas Michelle Rodriguez (actor) and Linda Chavez (political commentator) confront tangled branches in their family trees reflective of the intermarriage of cousins motivated by race-based colorism designed to enhance "European" heredity (see Scodari, 2013). Bringing colorism to light in genealogy texts and practices can diminish post-racial claims of "colorblindness" and illustrate one of the ways racialization works.

Probe Immigration and Diaspora

Two facts I discovered about my ancestors' immigration demonstrate how digging into one's family history can help create an empathetic context for negotiating contemporary circumstances. I found that two of my grandparents born in the U.S. but, as confirmed by their mothers' arrival documents, conceived in Italy, might today be called "anchor babies" and have their native citizenship challenged in certain quarters. Additionally, I found that in 1893, before he emigrated with his family, my great-grandfather accompanied his wife's siblings to America (see Scodari, 2013). The voyage on the ship "Karamania" was controversial, as cholera had broken out in Naples, where Italian migrants embarked. While their extended quarantine revealed no cholera, a *New York Times* editorial asked: "Why should the people of the United States be forced to submit to the great danger attending the importation of immigrants whom they do not want even when the country from which they come is not infected?" (Immigration from Naples, 1893, p. 4). Some might assert the "legality" of immigration in these instances. However, legal or not, immigration critics still strive for consistency between their prevailing dispositions and the law. By uncovering public resistance to "legal" immigration and learning that policies such as the Johnson Reed Act were efforts to rescind earlier legalities because of racism, nativism, and xenophobia, genealogy practitioners might realize or confirm, as I have, that these persist as motivators of anti-immigrant sentiment.

Timothy (2008) discerns that family history practitioners who are the "more visible

targets of racism and bigotry” are able to “come to terms with the past through the cathartic intensity of family history travel,” a practice vital in the “mediation of diasporic identities” (p. 129). Genealogy series depict many such journeys, but visits to Holocaust memorials by Jews and to African locales by African Americans following clues provided by DNA tests are most frequent. Less visible targets can be enlightened, too. When my sister and I toured the town in southern Italy where our paternal grandmother was born, I remarked to our guide that everyone had been so welcoming. He answered that this was because they did not get many tourists, even from northerly regions of Italy. “They think we’re all mafia,” he lamented. This drove home the importance of such travel in appreciating the plight of various immigrant groups and, in this case, the mindsets of racialized, southern Italians past and present. Today, if someone wonders where my family comes from I answer, without hesitation, “southern Italy.”

Put the Genes in their Place

Prospective patrons can find on the website of the scientifically oriented *Genographic Project* the following explanation of its autosomal testing: “You will also receive a visual percentage breakdown of your genomic ancestry by regional genetic affiliation. . . . Your regional genetic affiliations reflect the ancient migratory paths of your ancestors” (Participation, testing, and results, answer 11). Without profit as its impetus, the *Project* can avoid problematic terms such as “ethnic ancestry” and, instead, speak of “affiliation” with migratory groups. The label on the largest slice of the pie chart the *Project* produced for me is “Mediterranean,” which includes slivers of three continents and, consequently, is not easily reducible to a racial category. The *Project* might extend its caution and address potential abuses of this science as Nash critiques (2004), but genealogy television and other services could similarly shift *their* language, illustrate racist abuses, and emphasize that all human DNA is 99.9% identical (Koenig, Lee, & Richardson, 2008, p. 1). Two exigencies may inhibit them from doing so. One is that DNA supplies the only means of linking the progeny of African slaves to African tribes and locations, offering this progeny a keener sense of *African* identity than was theretofore possible. Second is the prevalence of cross promotion, as part of which family history series utilize DNA and other services by name and, in return, garner advertising revenue or “corporate sponsorship.”

Embrace Cultural Kinship

In 2006, a poster on the now-defunct TV discussion site Televisionwithoutpity.com shared a transgressive impulse to privilege culture over genetics in response to continental “ethnic ancestry” percentages presented to guests on *African American Lives*:

I feel that whatever “percentage” is white or whatever is irrelevant—I am Black because of a culture and a common struggle of my ancestors. I can look around my family and see the yellow and redbone, the noses and the eye colors to tell me that it wasn’t a direct trip from Ile de Goree. I don’t need a DNA test to tell me that.

On *Faces of America* (2/24/2010), writer Louise Erdrich, who is white and Native American, refuses a DNA test that might unsettle her family’s cultural identification with the Chippewa. As in the above post, genealogy TV should more fully probe the logic and values

behind such stances.

When I reconnected with “far-flung” maternal cousins on social media (Rainie & Wellman, 2013, chap. 1, sec. 2, para. 1), political differences resurfaced but multi-generational engagement and expertise with regard to music remained. Both of these are cultural, not genetic, bequests. Besides, my paternal cousins *by adoption* are closest to my siblings and me. Moreover, a recent family reunion prompted by social media contact verified that bonds of kinship are, appropriately, more adaptable than my very Italian grandparents would have imagined, as adoptees and family of an array of races and ethnicities were acknowledged. The reunion also reinforced southern Italian origins, as we huddled over a map to pinpoint various ancestral venues, all in the *Mezzogiorno*.

The fetishization of racial hybridity is also at issue. In a lighthearted segment of *African American Lives II* (2/13/2008), Gates explores his Irish heritage as confirmed by a Y-DNA test of his paternal ancestry. In a classroom, on a hillside where he encounters other descendants of the warlord King Niall, and at a pub where he gulps Guinness with newfound compatriots, the segment captures the bemused but warm attitudes of Gates and the Irish locals. While the segment suggests that hybridity revealed via DNA can expand horizons, these series should not underplay pressing *cultural* outlooks such as those held on behalf of descendants of African slaves, including Gates, for whom “European” DNA is often a consequence of kidnapping and rape.

Acknowledge and Disavow

When it comes to kinship, Kramer’s (2001) dictum that it “can be both acknowledged and disavowed” through genealogy is pivotal (p. 393). On *Who Do You Think You Are?* (2/3/2012), actor Martin Sheen rejects a progenitor whose prejudice caused pain to others, including an ancestor on another branch of his tree. While I cannot kick him out of my family tree, I disavow a 2X great-grandfather whose class privilege led him to kick my great-grandfather out of the family for marrying the daughter of tenant farmers, a footnote also appropriately ensconced in the tree. On *Finding Your Roots*, Ben Affleck could have acknowledged and disavowed his slave-owning ancestor as others have done. In the 2016 season of this series, ostensibly white actor Ty Burrell (1/5/2016) learns about Black female forebears and the white ancestor who impregnated one of them by slave rape. With, perhaps, the Affleck incident in mind, Burrell responds: “There is no way to just separate [the rapist] from the part I want to embrace. I want to just be with the heroines of the story.” However, for purposes of this essay, the most resistive response to discovery of a slave-owning ancestor is actor Bill Paxton’s on *Who Do You think You Are?* (4/19/2015). With the aid of a genealogist, Paxton detours away from his ancestors and searches for a slave named in his ancestor’s Will. This results in locating the *former* slave on a census of *free* citizens.

Conclusion

In concurring with the Global Family Reunion’s (2015) view that genealogy as a locus of representation and action has the potential to serve counter-hegemonic ends, this essay employs critical theory to identify frequent pitfalls related to race and ethnicity in family history texts and practices and sets recuperative trajectories for addressing them. One can envision enhancements

to existing websites that facilitate connection with what Rainie and Wellman (2013, chap. 1, sec. 2, para. 1) call “far-flung” relations and, perhaps, sites or software specifically geared to teaching and other critical uses of genealogy.

By providing digitally enhanced means, genealogists, libraries, archives, and other sites and services can also encourage patrons to take oppositional steps such as the one taken by Bill Paxton on *Who do you Think You Are?* In this case, such digital affordances would allow descendants of slaves, slave-owners, and others to confirm, with alacrity, the eventual freedom of an identified person formerly held in bondage.

In addition, the essay alludes to the prospect of applications that would demonstrate various manifestations of racism and nativism when it comes to immigration. When someone searches immigration records, a sidebar could appear that compares and contrasts public opinion and policies confronting various immigrant groups in various places and periods. This would reveal correspondences and distinctions relating to public opinion and policy as well as otherwise similar or distinct circumstances.

Particular options could arise from information in a family tree and make such heritage archives more participatory, as Labrador and Chilton (2009) recommend. For example, when someone indicates on his/her tree that an Irish ancestor arrived in the U.S. in 1845, a history of the Irish diaspora of that period could be accessible with a single click. Providers could also facilitate instantaneous sharing of this information with family members.

Following the essay’s framework, genealogy media such as television series, digital or brick and mortar archives, and genetic ancestry sites and services can remodel themselves, rectify oversights, and clarify problematic language. Subsequent studies can propose, in detail, specific recuperative adaptations for particular representations, practices, and applications within the broad arena of family history.

Notes

¹ U.S. documentary series referenced: *The Generations Project* (Brigham Young University TV, seasons 1-3, 2010-2012); *African American Lives* (PBS – Public Broadcasting Service, one season, 2006); *African American Lives II* (PBS, one season, 2008); *Faces of America* (PBS, one season, 2010); *Finding Your Roots* (PBS, seasons 1-3, every other year 2012 – present); *Genealogy Roadshow* (PBS, two seasons, 2013 – present); *Who Do You Think You Are?* (NBC – National Broadcasting Company, seasons 1-3, 2010-2012); (TLC – The Learning Channel, seasons 4-7, 2013-present). U.S. mockumentary sitcom series referenced: *Family Tree* (HBO – Home Box Office, one season, 2013).

² The study employs Anderson’s (2006) approach to “analytic auto-ethnography.” I gathered virtual ethnographic data by searching relevant keywords pertaining to race and ethnicity, genetic ancestry, genealogical practices, or family history television. Textual and ethnographic data and/or examples undergo analysis by way of the delineated critical theories.

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About the Author

Christine Scodari, Ph.D. (cscodari@fau.edu) is Professor of Media Studies at Florida Atlantic University. She teaches and writes about representations of identity and difference in traditional and digital media and participatory and other cultural practices. For the past five years, in the course of doing her own genealogy, she has studied, presented, and published in the area of family history media and culture.

Discussion Questions

1. If you were to study your background(s) using genealogy, which lineage(s) would you focus on and would this choice reflect your primary ethnic or racial identification(s)?
2. Why do you think older individuals have been likelier to engage in genealogy, and would focusing on race or ethnicity in genealogy texts and practices encourage more participation by young adults?
3. Most genealogy television series in the U.S. profile celebrities. Does this enhance or hinder fair and thorough historical representations when it comes to particular races or ethnicities and, if the latter, what other formats might do a better job?

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200 Years of Scottish Jewry: A Demographic and Genealogical Profile

Kenneth Collins

University of Glasgow & Hebrew University of Jerusalem

Neville Lamdan

National Library of Israel

Michael Tobias

JewishGen & Jewish Records Indexing – Poland

Abstract

The International Institute for Jewish Genealogy in Jerusalem is attempting the first-ever demographic and genealogical study of a national Jewry as a whole, from its inception to the present day. This article describes the project, its aims, methodology and preliminary results. We use specially developed data retrieval methods that enable the access of available online sources, and we demonstrate that the extensive datasets we have generated are amenable to multidisciplinary analysis and interpretation. Utilising detailed information from the Scottish Census in 1841 till the 1911 Census (the most recent available under access regulations) and vital records from the middle of the nineteenth century to date, plus newly digitised Scottish newspaper and court records, a new and clearer picture of Scottish Jewry emerges. In presenting demographic and historical results already available from the study, we challenge some conventional perceptions of Scottish Jewry and its evolution.

By way of illustration, the article presents some of the preliminary demographic and historical results of the study, which challenge conventional wisdom. Among other things, the study reveals the migrant and transitory nature of the Jewish population in the nineteenth century and documents its stabilisation and eventual decrease in the twentieth century, on the basis of birth, marriage and death rates; and its dispersal throughout the country, beyond the major concentrations in Glasgow and Edinburgh. Hopefully, this study will serve as a model for other genealogical research into defined groups, religious or otherwise, at the national level.

Keywords: Jews, Scotland; Scottish Jewry; Edinburgh; Glasgow; Transmigration

Project Description and Aims

The International Institute for Jewish Genealogy in Jerusalem is sponsoring a major project “200 Years of Scottish Jewry – a Demographic and Genealogical Profile.”³⁶ The study’s aim is to research a definable ethno-religious group at the national level – in this case, the entire Jewish community in Scotland, from its emergence as a formal entity in 1816/17, with the founding of a synagogue in Edinburgh, to the present day. As far we know, no similar genealogical analyses of any other national Jewries exist and thus we hope that the project will encourage further studies of Jewish communities of similar size and age. It also may stimulate genealogical studies of other ethnic, religious, or other groups at the national level.

The study endeavours to examine, systematically and for the first time, various aspects of Scottish Jewry as an immigrant group. These include the following:

1. Identifying Scotland’s Jews and locating their provenance, mainly from Central and Eastern Europe.
2. Ascertaining their numbers over time by analysing birth, marriage and death records.
3. Mapping the dispersal patterns of the Jewish immigrants throughout Scotland and the emergence of organised communities in 7 smaller towns and cities. This aspect includes residential shifts within Glasgow and, to a lesser extent, Edinburgh, reflecting progressive socio-economic changes in the two major concentrations of Scottish Jewry.
4. Producing occupational analyses and identifying various communal, religious, business, cultural élites, as they emerge.
5. Generating a “Family Tree of Scottish Jewry.” The published data will permit users to trace family relationships with Scottish Jews and in many cases with relatives who came from abroad. The creation of such a national Jewish family tree will be totally innovative.

The study also took note of a considerable body of Jews passing through Scotland on their way to the United States and other destinations. These Jews, whom we describe as transmigrants, were far more numerous than those settling in Scotland. The processes of their travel to the country and onward passage that we have revealed have also added to our understanding of Scotland’s Jews.

There are very specific reasons for our decision to select the Jewish community of Scotland for this genealogical experiment. Scottish Jewry is easy to demarcate and define. Its age, just 200 years old, and size, totaling around 70,000 individuals over these two centuries, make the project feasible. By way of contrast, it would have been impossible to attempt a similar project for the much larger and older Jewish community of England since its numbers, over four and a half centuries, run into millions. The primary records and sources for the project are readily available and the Scottish Jewish Archives Centre in Glasgow (SJAC) houses extensive collections of documents and other materials essential to this study.

³⁶ The mission of the International Institute of Jewish Genealogy (IIJG) is to advance Jewish genealogy and promote it as a recognised branch of Jewish Studies at the university level. It has sought to move well beyond the study of individuals or family units into areas with wider scope and relevance.

More critical from the perspective of a modern genealogical study, almost all the vital records (births, marriages, and deaths) are accessible online for the period under review. In addition, the first national censuses of Scotland in a modern form date, every ten years (or decile), from 1841 on – that is, just 25 years after the inception of the Jewish community in Scotland. The censuses from 1841 to 1911 are now in the public domain and accessible online. The numbers of Jews in Scotland from 1816 to 1841 were small, running from a few score at the beginning (many of whom are known by name) to 323 enumerated in the 1841 census. As we shall show, one can identify the Jews in Scotland from 1841 and 1911 with some confidence. A greater problem exists with identifying Jews in the century after 1911. Fortunately, there are other reliable sources at hand to fill the larger part of the missing data. This allows a reliable reconstruction of evolution of the community over the last hundred years with only small and acceptable margins of error, again enabling new understandings of the evolution of Scottish Jewry.

Data Retrieval – Methodology

1. The Project and its IT Challenges

Before the launching of the present study, the present co-author and project PI (principal investigator) had conducted a preliminary investigation³⁷ with the aim of locating and extracting every Jew in the Scottish Census Schedules and Statutory Civil Records from 1841 to 1901, i.e. all the Jews in Scotland in the 19th century, except for 300 to 400 in the decades prior to 1841. This was a huge task, and there are questions at the academic level about the feasibility of the exercise. After all, the Scottish Censuses and Civil Records do not mention religion. Some marriage records noted the religious rites or form of the ceremony and some early death certificates indicate the burial ground or cemetery section, but the online indexes did not include such details and so searches by religion *per se* were not possible.

The International Institute for Jewish Genealogy (IIJG) in Jerusalem approached the subject from a somewhat different perspective, seeking to elaborate a demographic and genealogical profile of Scottish Jewry since its inception in 1816/17. With the full cooperation of the present author and PI, IIJG decided to adopt the preliminary work and extend it to cover the 20th century, taking advantage of the recently released 1911 Scottish Census and also Statutory Civil Records, which are accessible online up to the present day. This task was fraught with inherent difficulties and methodological challenges, since beyond 1911 there were no “snapshot” lists of the Jewish population in Scotland at hand to use for reference or as starting points. Moreover, much of the study would hinge on tracing Jewish families identified and pursuing Jewish surnames after 1911 when, to complicate matters, many Jewish families begin to anglicise their names and, in so doing, take on surnames commonly used by non-Jews.

³⁷ Michael Tobias, (2012). A Study of 19th Century Scottish Jewry, M.Sc., Genealogical, Palaeographic, and Heraldic Studies, University of Strathclyde.

2. Censuses and the Search Process

The PI tested various techniques and methods in the preliminary study before settling on the methods employed to extract data from the Scottish Censuses from 1841 on. He designed special tools for searching the Ancestry³⁸ and the ScotlandsPeople³⁹ (SP) websites that were essential to the study.

Initially, he selected the 1901 Census as a target for analysis, primarily to identify as many Jews as possible living in Scotland at that time. His reasons for this were several:

- When conducting the preliminary feasibility study, the 1901 census was the latest available.
- The 1901 census was accessible through 2 (two) somewhat different data sources—Ancestry and SP. During the data extraction process a third source became available on the FindMyPast⁴⁰ (FMP) website.
- Ancestry was chosen as the primary site to use. The company could not display the census images due to licensing issues, but they had enriched their online database by extracting/indexing *every field* from the census returns. Its database also allowed the listing of all members of a located individual's household.
- Economic and convenience considerations also favoured the Ancestry website. Searches and extractions from it could be done online at any time for a reasonable fee, whereas SP was costly and/or inconvenient.
- The mass immigration of Jews from mainland Europe into Scotland took off the 1880s and 1890s. It was therefore expected that almost every Jewish household in 1901 would have at least one family member who had been born in mainland Europe and thus be could be identified by name or in another way, such as place of birth.

Hence, the initial step was to search the 1901 Census on Ancestry for individuals born in various Central and East European countries, plus Palestine. The project used 'Wildcards' and other advanced techniques to catch multiple spelling variants of Jewish names. Then, it trawled every separate field of data in the Ancestry 1901 Census database. Next, it compiled the search results into files on Excel spreadsheets. Finally, it merged the files and removed duplicate records. Thereafter, the PI processed all positively identified records a second time and extracted every associated household member. Again the PI removed all duplicate records.

³⁸ Ancestry.com – <http://www.ancestry.com> Last accessed 14 December 2015.

³⁹ ScotlandsPeople - <http://www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk> Last accessed 14 December 2015.

⁴⁰ Find My Past - <http://www.findmypast.co.uk> Last accessed 14 December 2015.

The *interim* result from these first stages of this process resulted in a consolidated file of around 37,000 records. The PI manually reviewed these records on the basis of given names. Where necessary, he examined other available primary records for identified families, flagging those that were definitely Jewish or possibly Jewish. Of individuals listed as coming from Russia and Poland, the vast majority were clearly Jewish. A negligible number were Russian/Lithuanian miners immigrated in the 19th century to work in coalmines in Lanarkshire, but as they tended to use distinctively non-Jewish given-names and since mining was not a typically ‘Jewish occupation’, they could confidently be rejected. Individuals from Germany were more difficult to classify, as their surnames and given names reflected the greater assimilation of German Jews into the general population at home. Many of these German families entered the final lists on the assumption that they may have had some Jewish ancestry.⁴¹

The *end result* of the process was a file extracted from the 1901 Census, containing around 9,000 individuals, residing in around 1700 households, who were almost certainly Jewish. This multi-step exercise then was repeated methodically for all decennial censuses from 1841 to 1891.

The PI went on to compare the refined 1901 Census file with data provided by the SJAC⁴² for Glasgow and Edinburgh derived from earlier, independent research. The list generated from Ancestry had missed a few families, in which every member was born in the UK. These families were in the SJAC data-files. Extractions from the 1901 Census only overlooked some 100 individuals, while it identified around 2,700 more individuals than in the SJAC records.⁴³

Of the 9,000 Jews in Scotland in 1901, approximately 3,000 claimed to be born in the country. The search for these individuals came in the wake of the investigation of births data (below).

The 1911 census became available during the course of the present study and at present (March 2016) is only available on the SP website. It was therefore not possible to use the same techniques as used for the previous censuses on the Ancestry site. Instead, the PI searched comprehensively for every surname in the lists compiled, as well as all combinations of given-name and surname, except for common and shared surnames. This search method proved highly effective on the 1911 census.

⁴¹ C. C. Aronsfeld, German Jews in Dundee, *Jewish Chronicle*, 20 November 1953, p. 15.

⁴² Scottish Jewish Archives Centre - <http://www.sjac.org.uk> Last accessed 14 December 2015

⁴³ The numbers of Jews we have compiled agree reasonably well with those quoted in the *Jewish Year Book*. We also searched for people mentioned in various books published about Scottish Jewry. In particular, we used Abraham Levy's *The Origins of Scottish Jewry* (Glasgow, 1958) and Abel Phillips' *A History of the Origins of the First Jewish Community in Scotland: Edinburgh, 1816* (Edinburgh, 1979) to help identify the earliest, pre-registration period, congregations. In all probability, we have overlooked some genuine Jews, while we have almost certainly included a few non-Jews in our lists. Overall, however, we believe our numbers are close to the actual numbers (see Assessment below).

3. Births and the List of Surnames

The individuals who claimed in the Censuses 1841 to 1911 to be born in Scotland bore around 700 unique surnames. To this list was added all unique surnames that appeared in the SJAC Scottish Jews database. An automated search was then done on the SP website for births from 1855-2014 for all of these unique surnames to test how common those surnames were in the Statutory Birth Records. The PI reviewed the results and manually divided them into two categories – rare and common surnames. Many of the Jewish families had typically Jewish surnames that we do not find among non-Jews in Scotland or only very rarely (Mandel, for example). Others had surnames that were ‘common’ surnames and not predominantly used by Jews. These searches produced a huge number of birth matches. A few examples of Jewish families using ‘common’ surnames were Alexander (29,000 hits), Baker (4,000 hits), Banks (6,000 hits), and Brown (172,000 hits).

The PI developed scripts to search for relevant Scottish Birth Certificates on the SP website. These scripts automatically extracted pages of index results to Excel spreadsheets with the fields for Year, Surname, Forename, Sex, District, City, County, MR, and Record Reference pre-populated.

The following logic was used to determine scripted searches conducted on the SP website:

- If an exact spelling match was found for a given Jewish surname and it was not a common surname, then *all* records for that surname were searched for and extracted
- If an exact spelling match was found and it was a common surname, then only that precise “surname + given-name” combinations from the Censuses were looked for and extracted. As a result, some family members in common surnames cases may have been missed – e.g., children who died young or were otherwise missing from the census.
- If an exact spelling match was not located but a ‘fuzzy match’ (see below) was found then only the precise “surname + given-name” combination from the Censuses were searched for and extracted. Again, there is a possibility that a few family members may have been overlooked when bearing the same fuzzy-spelling surname.
- If no match, exact or fuzzy, was found, then certain manual searches were done for badly transcribed names.
- Birth Registrations were searched for using a plus or minus 5-year range around the birth year suggested by the census returns.
- Soundex and metaphone searches were not conducted since, for practical purposes, these tools are only appropriate for English names and pronunciation, and not for European Jewish names.

The SP website also accessed “fuzzy matches,” a distance technique developed by Vladimir Levenshtein,⁴⁴ a Russian Jew. This technique, which forms the basis of most spell-

⁴⁴ Vladimir I. Levenshtein, Biography, http://ethw.org/Vladimir_I._Levenshtein Last accessed 14 December 2015.

checking systems, compares the similarity of two names and is very successful at finding matches between names corrupted by poor handwriting/transcription or misheard foreign-sounding names in both the Census data and Birth Registrations. Table 1 provides some examples of fuzzy matching at work, where the same parents' names, occupations and often addresses are found in both the census and birth records and it is almost certain the individuals listed are the same people. We have accepted those cases where the match seems perfect.

Table
Matches using Levenshtein Distance

1

Census Surname	Census	Census	SP	SP	SP
	Given-name	YOB	YOB	Surname	Given-name
Bencovitzky	Zalic	1897	1896	Benkovitch	Zelik
Balarski	Sarah	1900	1900	Boiaski	Sarah Lovey
Chatzkellon	Annie	1897	1897	Chatzkelew	Annie
Dausrick	Bessie	1896	1895	Dantzick	Bessie
Calisher	Rachael	1897	1897	Ealesher	Rachel
Ferantglech	Morris	1901	1900	Franzlich	Morris

The PI manually processed Births Results File to flag all records that were definitely or possibly Jewish. There were approximately 23,000 records in this file. These included Jewish births up to 1901 that did not appear in a census. Reasons for the omissions might have been that these people may have died or left Scotland before their first census date; the census takers missed them; they had assumed a married surname before the census(es); or, finally, they were in fact included in the census(es) but were indexed under mangled and ultimately unrecognisable names.

If, while viewing a record image, the PI noted that another birth on the page was for a Jewish individual and that person did not appear in the Births List, then he added the individual manually to the list. If a birth record contained information that was unclear due to a poor quality image, a damaged record, bad handwriting etc., then the PI looked for and viewed corresponding parents' marriage record, if held in Scotland, to try to identify the correct information. The full marriage information was extracted into a separate Marriages List.

In total, the PI and a team of extractors examined about 28,000 birth certificates, both Jewish and non-Jewish. Over 3,500 of the Jewish people listed on these birth certificates were found in the censuses to 1901 - others died young or, in far greater numbers, left Scotland for elsewhere.

4. Marriages

The list of Unique Surnames compiled in 2 and 3 above was processed yet again by another script through the SP website, searching for all matching marriages (both bride and groom) in the 1855 to 2014 period. The search results indexes were extracted to a Marriages File for further manual processing. In all, the PI and the team of extractors examined and extracted index results for 13,000 marriages.

The Scottish Birth Registrations referred to many couples, who were wed outside Scotland. Where their marriages took place in England and Wales, most references to their marriage records were found by searching the Ancestry and FindMyPast England and Wales marriage indexes. This exercise also proved useful in determining precise spellings of the names of the groom and bride.

Additionally, the PI searched references to couples married in ‘Poland’ (or towns in southern Lithuania that were once in the Suwalki Gubernia of Poland) in the Jewish Records Indexing – Poland (JRI-PL) databases.⁴⁵ He only verified a few such matches in this resource. Marriages conducted in other places abroad (especially the former Russian Empire, where most foreign-born Scottish Jews came from) could not be cross-checked.

5. Deaths

The list of Unique Surnames compiled in 2 and 3 above was then processed by still another script through the SP website, searching for all matching deaths in the 1855 to 2014 period. The search results indexes were extracted to a Deaths File for further manual processing. All told, the PI and the team of extractors retrieved index results to almost 20,000 deaths and then re-processed them for positive identification.

6. Other Sources utilised to identify Jews in Scotland

Besides the Scottish Censuses and Statutory Birth, Death and Marriage Records, other sources were available to identify people not listed or not (yet) located on those official records. These included:

- England and Wales Censuses 1841-1911 – searching for Jewish families where at least one member was born in Scotland.
- Irish Censuses for 1901 and 1911 - searching for Jewish families where at least one family member was born in Scotland. (Religion was included in the Irish Census).⁴⁶
- The *Jewish Echo* weekly newspaper in Glasgow, (1928-1991) - extraction of all “Personal Announcements” into a separate file, for comparison with the data compiled thus far. The announcements extracted for further searches relate to Births, Barmitzvahs and Batmitzvahs (for searches into birth registrations 13 or 12 years earlier), Engagements, Marriages and Wedding Anniversaries and Deaths. Since some events announced in the *Jewish Echo* took place outside of Scotland, not all events were to be found in the Statutory Registrations.

⁴⁵ Jewish Records Indexing – Poland. <http://jri-poland.org> Last accessed 14 December 2015.

⁴⁶ National Archives of Ireland - <http://www.census.nationalarchives.ie> Last accessed 14 December 2015.

- SJAC: Glasgow and other Hebrew Burial Society⁴⁷ records - examination of almost complete lists of Scottish Jewish burials, for comparison with the Deaths List previously compiled.
- SJAC: British naturalizations – examination of almost complete list of Scottish Jews who became Naturalized British subjects, for corroboration and expansion by searching the online “Discovery” catalogue of the British National Archives⁴⁸, as well as a parallel database available on Ancestry.

7. Assessment

The methodology described above has proved effective in the goal of generating a comprehensive database of Scottish Jews since the community's emergence early in the 19th century. As regards the 19th century, the list of Jews can be regarded as almost complete, within a reasonable margin of omission. As regards the 20th century, the listings are less complete, mainly because of the absence of accessible Census returns. This deficiency was made up in large part by the availability of statutory Birth, Marriage and Death Registrations, coupled with data extracted from other sources. In brief, a ramified and reliable database, unique of its kind, has been generated, which can serve as a solid basis for multi-disciplinary analysis and interpretation, whether genealogical, demographic, statistical, historical or sociological.

Creating an Historical Narrative: What the Data Tells Us

Earliest Jews and the Beginnings of Community

The story of Jewish medical students, mainly from England, but also from the United States of America and the West Indies, who were studying and graduating at the University of Edinburgh from 1779, has been known for some time.⁴⁹ They were attracted mainly by the absence of the religious tests, which prevented their entry to Oxford and Cambridge. However, it is the online searches of Scottish Court Cases which have revealed the presence of a previously unknown group of Jewish artisans residing in Edinburgh during the 1780s. One of their number was dispatched to London for training as a *shochet* (ritual slaughterer) to provide kosher chickens for the fledgling community. Digitised press publications have enabled the identification of the date for the formation of the Edinburgh Hebrew Congregation and its first synagogue, the first official Jewish body in Scotland. This study has determined the year of establishment as 1817, rather than 1816 as previously held.⁵⁰ Similarly, we have determined the date for the first account

⁴⁷ Glasgow Hebrew Burial Society - <http://glasgowhebrewburialsociety.org> Last accessed 14 December 2015.

⁴⁸ The National Archives - <http://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk> Last accessed 14 December 2015.

⁴⁹ Kenneth Collins, *Go and Learn: the International Story of the Jews and Medicine in Scotland: 1739-1945* (Aberdeen, 1988), pp. 43-44; Kenneth Collins, "Levi Myers (1767-1822): An eighteenth century Glasgow medical graduate from South Carolina," *Journal Medical Biography*, 2014, epub 0967772013518471. Matriculation records for all medical students at the University of Edinburgh give details on the origins of the students from 1740, Edinburgh University Library Archives.

⁵⁰ Abel Phillips, *A History of the Origins of the First Jewish Community in Scotland: Edinburgh, 1816*, Edinburgh, 1979.

of the Glasgow Hebrew Congregation to be 1821, at the time of a visit to the city by Sir Moses Montefiore, rather than a couple of years later, as generally accepted previously.⁵¹



Figure 1. Synagogue Building in Richmond Court, Edinburgh, purchased 1825.

Immigration and Population Growth

The Jewish community in Scotland expanded steadily, and at times rapidly, throughout the 19th century, mainly due at first to immigration from Germany or Holland. In the last quarter of the century, the bulk of immigration came from Central and Eastern Europe. Table 2 illustrates a rapid rate of community growth coupled with a low level of ‘persistence’ (continued residence in Scotland), indicative of the high percentage of Jews moving on, often to England but more usually across the Atlantic.

Table 2

Jewish Community Growth during the 19th Century

Census	Jews in Scotland	Scottish Born	Scottish Born %	*Persistence	*Persistence %	Jews in Glasgow	Jews in Edinburgh
1841	335	150	44.8%	106	31.6%	131	152
1851	362	143	39.5%	119	32.9%	193	126
1861	444	200	45.0%	145	32.7%	227	156
1871	835	345	41.3%	285	34.1%	441	244
1881	1643	666	40.5%	758	46.1%	1057	349
1891	3242	1198	37.0%	1725	53.2%	1976	987
1901	9066	3147	34.7%	3858	42.6%	6866	1623
1911	11730	4506	38.4%			8899	2021

Note: *Persistence indicates the numbers from the previous Census still present at the next one.

⁵¹ See Kenneth Collins, *Second City Jewry: The Jews of Glasgow in the Age of Expansion 1790-1990*, Glasgow, 1990, p.19, where he mentions both dates.

As shipping records indicate a drop in travellers reaching or passing through Scotland after 1911 we have been able to show, using figures for births and deaths, that subsequent population growth was largely a function of natural increase rather than inward migration, apart for the arrival of around a thousand refugees from Central Europe during the 1930s.⁵² By the beginning of the 20th century the Jewish population in Scotland became more settled and more stable. The study has confirmed a relatively young Jewish population with a comparatively high birth rate and low death rate. This ensured that natural growth would more than compensate for an almost complete halt in immigration with the outbreak of World War I. In the absence of Census returns, it is not possible to achieve absolute numbers for the Jewish population of Scotland for the century between 1911 and 2011. However, with the aid of Statutory Birth, Marriage and Death records and extensive data drawn from other sources mentioned in the Methodology section above, its parameters can be clearly delineated and its order of magnitude can be ascertained. Within that broad framework, we can observe certain trends:

- (1) The number of Jews in Scotland peaked in the 1930's at about 20,000, a level that was maintained till around 1960.
- (2) The inflow of Jewish refugees from Central Europe during the 1930s and 1940's, including the Kindertransport children admitted to Britain following Kristallnacht in November 1938, was balanced by migration to England and the United States, Canada, Australia and elsewhere.
- (3) The Jewish population began to diminish in the 1960s. The number of births was decreasing, deaths increasing and an increasingly well-educated population was moving south or emigrating. This decrease has continued in recent decades, reflecting a rapidly ageing population, ongoing emigration and assimilation.
- (4) We have precise figures for self-declaring Jews in the Scottish Censuses of 2001 and 2011. Besides the numbers of Jews who identified themselves as Jewish - 6,448 in 2001 and 5,887 ten years later - we can consider, based on Census research elsewhere that possibly as many as a third more can be added to these numbers.⁵³

Dispersal of Jews and Emergence of Smaller Communities

The methodology employed in this study enabled us to track the dispersal of Jews throughout Scotland and indeed to follow certain families and their movements over several

⁵² Estimated to be 'thousands' by Rayner Kolmel, German Jewish Refugees in Scotland, in Kenneth Collins, editor, *Aspects of Scottish Jewry* (Glasgow, 1987), p. 57. Other estimates put the figure around 1,000. See Kenneth Collins, *The Growth and Development of Scottish Jewry, 1880-1940*, p. 50, also in *Aspects of Scottish Jewry*.

⁵³ Marlena Schmool, Jews in Scotland: The 2001 Census, in Kenneth Collins with Ephraim Borowski and Leah Granat, *Scotland's Jews: A Guide to the History and Community of the Jews in Scotland* (Glasgow, 2008), pp. 56-59. Marlena Schmool was Community Research Director for the Board of Deputies and based on a 13% rate for Jews not answering the voluntary question in Leeds, a community of similar size and with a similar age profile she estimated the 2001 Jewish population in Scotland at 7,450. This left a further 1,785 Jews who answered another question in the Census saying their upbringing was Jewish but they now followed no religion. The Director of the Scottish Council of Jewish Communities, Dr. Ephraim Borowski, suggested in a footnote, based on the Canadian Census, that the number of undeclared Jews, based on a religion question, rather than an ethnic one, could be as high as 33%.

generations. At the turn of the twentieth century there were small groups of Jews in the towns of Falkirk, Dunfermline, Greenock and Inverness.⁵⁴ This study has indicated that communities were established in these towns, sometimes with as few as thirty Jews, or about a dozen families. They would often employ a minister, a religious functionary not always possessing *semicha* (rabbinical ordination), who would act also as *shochet* and *cheder* (religious school) teacher to educate the community's young. They opened small synagogues, frequently no more than a room in the minister's flat. Jewish communities were often slow to declare the formal, and necessarily public, establishment of a 'Hebrew Congregation', the title taken by all official Jewish communities throughout Scotland. Thus, in Glasgow and Edinburgh, Aberdeen and Dundee, and in the other small communities, synagogues were regularly in existence for a number of years before public exposure, often due to concerns over possible expressions of prejudice in the wider population. In Aberdeen, for example, there were already sufficient Jews in 1871 to found a community but the actual formation of the Aberdeen Hebrew Congregation dates only from 1893.⁵⁵

Most of these regional communities experienced major numerical decline in the period after the Second World War. Table 3 shows that of the seven smaller communities, only those in Aberdeen and Dundee, still exist today.

Table 3
Provincial Jewish Communities in Scotland

Town/City	Date of Formation	Synagogue	Burial Ground	Present Status
Aberdeen	1893	+	+	Active
Ayr	1904	+	-	*Dissolved - 1975
Dundee	1878	+	+	Active
Dunfermline	1908	+	-	*Dissolved - 1950
Falkirk	1906	+	-	*Dissolved - 1950
Greenock	1894	+	+	*Dissolved - 1951
Inverness	1906	+	+	*Dissolved - 1955

Note: A community's demise is often hard to determine. The asterisk (*) in the Present Status column indicates when all community activity clearly ended

Jewish Population Shifts within Glasgow

The accurate identification of Jews in Glasgow on a city-wide basis has enabled us to chart the movement of Jews out of the initial areas of settlement, as the community expanded and more prosperous elements emerged. The first Jews in the early 19th century were concentrated north of the River Clyde around the city centre, in the Blackfriars area. Gradually,

⁵⁴ The only detailed published account of the small Jewish communities in Scotland is: Nathan Abrams, *Caledonian Jews: A Study of Seven Small Communities in Scotland*, Jefferson, NC, 2007.

⁵⁵ Nathan Abrams, *Caledonian Jews*, pp. 20-21.

a movement westwards occurred to larger houses and away from the tenement buildings in the centre of Glasgow. Later arrivals, from the 1880s, tended to settle south of the river, in the Gorbals area. Figure 2 illustrates the pattern of settlement of the core of the 6,900 Jews in Glasgow identified in the 1901 Census. Of interest is the substantial Jewish element just to the north of the river, who felt a greater cultural affinity with the new institutions and synagogues being formed, often on an East European model, in the Gorbals, rather than with the “cathedral” synagogue of the established community at Garnethill in the north-west of the city.

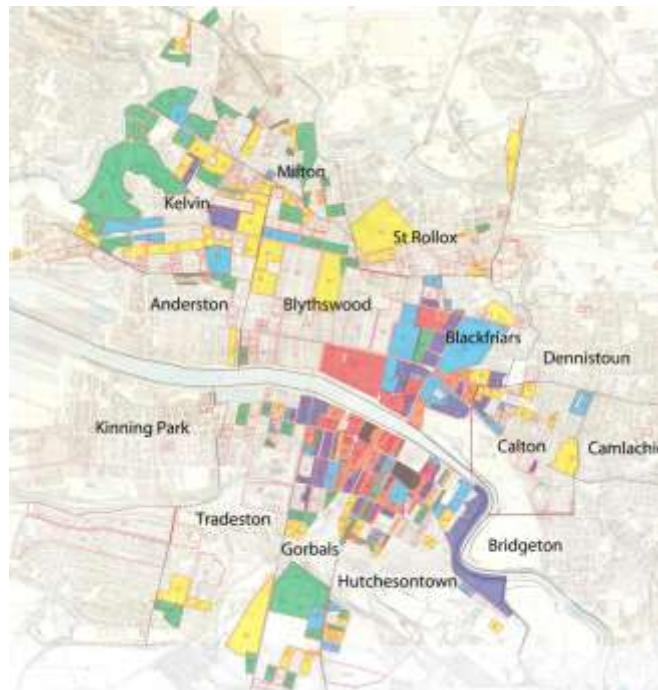


Figure 2. This map, derived from the 1901 Census, indicates where Glasgow Jews resided by Census Enumeration Districts. The highest concentrations are coloured black and the next level in red. The smallest concentrations are coloured yellow and green with intermediate areas in blue.

Births, Marriages and Deaths

As Statutory Birth Registration only began in Scotland in 1855, we cannot regard the earliest data as completely reliable, since some births were not recorded properly or even not registered at all. Nevertheless, it can be seen from Figure 3 that, in the decades between 1841 and 1881, around 40% of the community were born in Scotland.

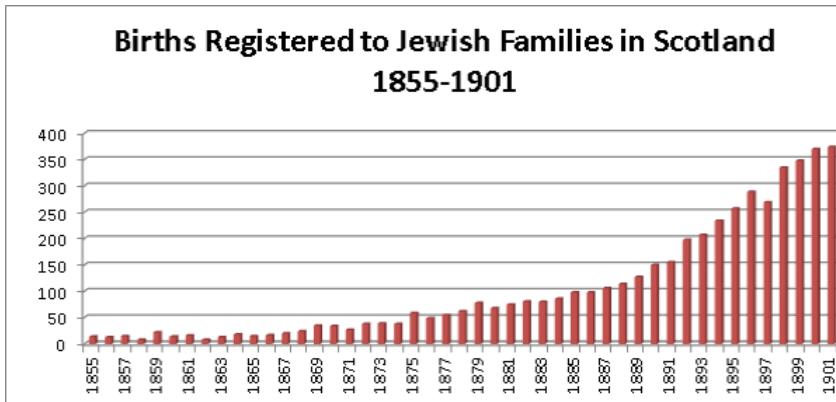


Figure 3. Births registered to Jewish families in Scotland 1855-1901.

The remarkable growth in the number of Jewish births that occurred throughout the latter half of the 19th century can be observed in Figure 3. While only 106 Jewish births were identified for the 1850s, the number grew to 583 during the 1870s on the eve of the great migration of Russian Jews that began in the 1880s. Twenty years later, during the 1890s, 2,785 births were recorded. The number reached a peak a decade later, between 1900 and 1909, when there were 4,576 births. In other words, from 1900 on, natural increase had become a larger factor in community growth and stability than immigration, a development not identified in earlier community studies.

Table 4
Jewish Births, Marriages, Deaths, and Natural Population Change in Scotland 1910-2000

Decade	Births	Marriages	Deaths	Natural Population Change
1910	3698	836	1094	+2604
1920	2621	1125	1104	+1517
1930	1971	1255	1320	+651
1940	2125	1671	1701	+424
1950	1708	935	1571	+137
1960	1311	823	1657	-346
1970	1004	714	1647	-643
1980	784	480	1561	-777
1990	577	371	1437	-860
2000	323	328	1082	-759

Table 4 illustrates the significant Jewish population growth through natural increase, especially during the two decades after 1910, a trend that continued through the 1950s. This natural increase of around 5,000 between 1910 and 1960 explains the growth and subsequent stabilisation of the Jewish population in Scotland. The year 1946 represented the beginning of the baby boomer era, which raised the number of Jewish births and maintained community numbers. However, from the 1960s on, the number of deaths exceeded the number of births and the Jewish population began to diminish. The numbers of births dropped steadily during the 1990s and beyond, falling to under 400 during the first decade of the twenty-first century.

The mapping of the places of marriage for the Jews living in Scotland has provided important data regarding the geographical origins of Scotland's Jews. During the course of the nineteenth century, most marriages of Jews who came to settle in Scotland took place in Poland and the Russian Empire (mainly Lithuania, and to an extent Latvia). These areas had the geographical advantage of easy access to Baltic shipping ports and although the geographical spread of migrants expanded from the 1890s, the great majority still hailed from Poland and Russian Lithuania. Following the expulsions of Jews from Moscow and tensions in St. Petersburg in 1891, small numbers of Jewish immigrants of means from those cities arrived in Scotland.



Figure 4. Origins of Scottish Jewry on the basis of marriages abroad.

As many of the immigrants were young couples with small children, it took longer for the numbers of local marriage to grow. They increased very gradually and peaked only in the 1940s, when around 1,600 Jewish weddings took place in Scotland. Thereafter, there was a slow but steady decline in the number of marriages, falling to under 350 in the 2000s. The reasons for this phenomenon were several. There was all but no immigration after World War II, while many of the wartime refugees moved on. The community at large was ageing and beginning to decline in size. From the 1960s on, more Jewish school-leavers received a higher education and chose to study at English universities in cities such as Manchester and Leeds, where there were large Jewish communities. Few returned to set up homes in Scotland. Indeed, many of the marriages were made up of couples in which one partner was from outside Scotland, further inducing the newlyweds to revert to and remain in England. In the last 20 years, the reduced numbers may

also have been affected by increased social mobility, a gravitation of young people to London and the effects of modern lifestyles, including partnering and late marriage, plus a tendency to wed outside Scotland, all in keeping with trends in the wider society.

Death figures for the nineteenth century bear witness to a high child mortality rate.⁵⁶ In the 1870s, before mass migration from Eastern Europe was underway, about half of all Jewish deaths occurred in those aged under 16 years, with a majority aged less than 1 year. While figures were comparatively small in the 1870s, the growth in the size of the community over the next two decades and concomitant rise in the number of deaths permits a clearer assessment of patterns and trends. Infant mortality remained high until after the World War I, although Jewish fatalities were perhaps less than those in the wider community.⁵⁷ Only in the 1930s did the number of child deaths begin to fall significantly, eventually dropping to negligible rates in recent decades. Thus the number of births came to far outstrip deaths, for some 30 years. The 1950s were, however, the last decade in which births exceeded deaths. The number of deaths peaked in the 1970s, when a distinct trend indicated an ageing population, unable to sustain itself by natural growth. While the number of deaths gradually began to fall - to around 1,600 between 2000 and 2009 - it was clear that overall demographic shift and decline was accelerating, as Table 5, which takes three representative post-war years, shows.

Table 5
Jewish Births, Marriages, and Deaths in post-war Scotland

Year	Births	Marriages	Deaths	Natural Population Change
1946	260	160	170	+90
1976	90	70	170	-80
2006	30	30	100	-70

Note: These figures do not include marriages where just one partner was Jewish and births and where the child was not recognized as Jewish by religious law.

Occupations

Census returns have provided easily tabulated information on the occupations of the individuals living in Glasgow from 1841. In the early years, the predominant occupations among the Jews population were described as merchants or agents, usually dealing in goods demanded by Glasgow's developing middle class, such as clothing, furs and jewelry. There was also ready

⁵⁶ Kenneth Collins, *Be Well! Jewish Immigrant Health and Welfare in Glasgow 1860-1920* (West Linton, 1920), p. 80, indicated that Jewish infant mortality was around a third lower than in the wider community.

⁵⁷ Kenneth Collins, *Be Well!*, pp. 78-82.

employment for the Jews arriving in the city in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, engaged in the so-called ghetto trades of tailoring and furniture-making. Tailoring became the dominant Jewish occupation from 1881. In a list submitted to a House of Lords Select Committee in 1889, Jewish master-tailors in Glasgow numbered twenty-eight, of whom about half were located in the Gorbals district.⁵⁸ Interestingly, a short time after 1891 almost 14% of the Glasgow's Jews moved into occupations associated with the thriving tobacco industry (though this percentage rapidly reduced in subsequent decades with the acquisition of more occupational skills).

Hawking and peddling became a common form of activity from 1881 onwards, not only as a primary immigrant occupation but also as a means of making initial business contacts and even laying the ground for setting up in business independently.⁵⁹ In 1881, more than a quarter of the Jews in the Gorbals lived by this occupation. Ten years later, their numbers exceeded that of tailors. In 1911, the number of Jewish peddlers, hawkers or travelling salesman in Glasgow alone was over 500, indicating the pervasiveness and persistence of this precarious way of life. The proportion in Edinburgh was reported to be even higher.⁶⁰ Small shop-keeping in the Gorbals also became significant by 1891. About a third of the shops were butchers, bakers and grocers, probably catering in large part to the kosher food needs of the Jewish population. General merchants, small manufacturers and traders multiplied in the first decades of the mass migration from the Russian Empire but their numbers declined as the twentieth century progressed as the shape of business changed. Less predictably, the community included blacksmiths, tinsmiths, bricklayers, coal merchants, a postman and a golf club maker. One woman, Martha Green, was identified as a nut-cutter in a biscuit factory.

Development of Jewish Organisations

With the detailed data generated by the study we can now understand the factors that led all of Scotland's Jewish communities, even the smallest, to set up a wide range of organisations. Most had welfare societies, providing support for their poorest members. Many also had educational, social, cultural and political groups. In Edinburgh, the multiple social, cultural, educational and welfare activities were organised through the synagogue. In Glasgow, with its greater size and resources, many of these bodies had independent identities. Thus, the Jewish Board of Guardians, *Talmud Torah* (afternoon and Sunday religious school), the Jewish Old Age Home, the Maccabi sports club, the Glasgow Zionist Organisation and Youth Movements, such as *Habonim* and *Bnei Akiva*, had their own premises. Women's societies were active in raising funds for worthy Jewish charities and encouraging the participation of women in communal activity. Despite small numbers, such activities took place in communities from Ayr to Inverness, indicating the attachment of these small, often remote groupings to Jewish traditions and values. Over time, the

⁵⁸ Julius Pinto, "Jewish Master Tailors in Glasgow," *Fourth Report of the House of Lords Select Committee on the Sweating System, 1889* (Henry Hansard and Son printers, Eyre and Spottiswoode, London, 1889), col. 26056.

⁵⁹ David Daiches, *Two Worlds: An Edinburgh Jewish Childhood*, Edinburgh, 1954. See also Kenneth Collins, *Second City Jewry*, pp. 47, 62, 153.

⁶⁰ Lloyd P. Gartner, *The Jewish Immigrant in England 1870-1914* (London, 1960), p. 60.

social and welfare bodies in Glasgow developed a level of sophistication in their delivery of services that was the envy of many larger communities.⁶¹

Development of Religious, Business, Professional, Cultural Elites

In describing the changes in the character of the Jewish community brought about by the large scale immigration, the narrative of the emergence of the various elites sheds light the nature of the evolving community. Rapid acculturation, educational achievement and professional aspiration were powerful factors in the social transition of the community from the 'ghetto trades' of peddling, tailoring and cabinet-making into large-scale commercial enterprises and later into the professions, especially medicine.

The first Jewish businesses reflected a move into more conventional retail activity. Most remained relatively small but others, such as the chain of department stores run by the Goldberg family, showed considerable innovation in commercial enterprise. Some families became involved in the Scottish distilling industry. A leading figure in the whisky trade, Sir Maurice Bloch, was highly active in community organisations, local politics and philanthropy. One of the most prominent British Jewish entrepreneurs, Sir Isaac Wolfson, grew up in Glasgow and in addition to his ownership of hundreds of businesses of different kinds, he was a renowned supporter of Jewish and university charities, eventually honoured with colleges in his name in Oxford and Cambridge. Scottish Jews moved into the legal profession in substantial numbers after World War II.

Such a professional element as existed in the early community was composed mainly of the rabbis, reverends and other religious functionaries who officiated in the various communities around Scotland. An examination of digitised newspaper reports and city directories has corrected accounts of the early religious leadership in Edinburgh and established that the first minister in Edinburgh was Meyer Rintel, while his contemporary, Moses Joel, served the community later in the century. Joel and Rintel were to be the first of upwards of 250 rabbis and ministers who have served the various Scottish communities until present. While the smaller communities did not possess the resources to retain ministers for more than a short period, leading to a high turnover rate, Glasgow and Edinburgh were home to many distinguished rabbis and *chazanim* (cantors), over the years. Rabbi Samuel Hillman, who was the communal rabbi in Glasgow from 1908 till 1914, became a *dayan* (religious judge) in the London *Bet Din* (rabbinical court). Rabbi Salis Daiches led the Edinburgh community with great distinction between 1918 and 1945. He did much to acquaint the wider Scottish public with the Jewish community and its concerns, as did Rev. Dr. I. K. Cosgrove in Glasgow. Other rabbis, including Rabbis Naftali Shapiro, Benyamin Beinush Atlas and Jacob David Lurie, were proud representatives of a more traditional religious orthodoxy of the Eastern European kind. Rabbi Dr. Wolf Gottlieb, a refugee from Vienna, was head of the Glasgow *Bet Din* from 1956 to the early 1970s and combined strict Orthodoxy with an openness to secular intellectual enquiry.

There were a few medical practitioners in Glasgow and Edinburgh from the middle of the nineteenth century on, their numbers only becoming significant in the twentieth century. Thus, among 62 Jewish medical workers identified in the 1911 Census, there were 30 medical students

⁶¹ Kenneth Collins, *Be Well!*, pp. 50-77. See also the comparison between Jewish provision for care of patients with tuberculosis in Glasgow and London, pp. 86-90.

as well as the first four Jewish doctors to practise permanently in Scotland. The sons and daughters of immigrants arriving in the 1880s were the first to take advantage of the open nature of the Scottish education system. By 1912, Jewish student societies had been formed at the universities in Glasgow and Edinburgh, with a majority studying medicine and smaller numbers planning to take up other professional callings, among which teaching was prominent.⁶² Many of the Jews who entered the medical profession distinguished themselves, with such outstanding figures as Noah Morris and Sir Abraham Goldberg, both appointed Regius Professors of the Practice of Medicine at Glasgow University. Refugee psychiatrists and other mental health practitioners, especially the analyst Karl Abenheimer and the neurosurgeon Joseph Schorstein, who arrived from Germany and Austria during the 1930s, made an acknowledged contribution to a previously underdeveloped speciality in Scotland.⁶³

At one time, the Scottish High Court of Justice boasted several Jewish members, including Sir Gerald Gordon, a leading exponent of Scots law, and Lady Hazel Cosgrove, the first woman to serve as a High Court Judge. The Scottish art scene was also enhanced by Jewish immigrants. Benno Schotz came to Glasgow from Estonia in 1912 and entered Glasgow's renowned Charles Rennie MacKintosh School of Art, eventually to become Professor of Sculpture and the Queen's 'Sculptor-in-Ordinary' in Scotland. Schotz nurtured the talent of refugee artists, like Yankel Adler and Josef Herman, who passed through Glasgow during the war years.

Transmigrants

The study has revealed that most Jews reaching Scotland from the middle of the 19th century until the outbreak of World War I were in fact transmigrants, that is migrants who used Scotland as a staging post on the route to North America. We have already noted the low level of persistence though the nineteenth century, indicating that only a minority of Jewish newcomers in Scotland remained there a decade later. An interesting statistic that confirms the fluid nature of the Jewish population in Scotland is that in 1901 there were only 14 Jews over the age of 46 years who were born in Scotland before Statutory Birth Registration was introduced in 1855, since all other Scottish-born Jews in that age-bracket had departed. Generally speaking, most of the Jewish transmigrants crossing Scotland and Britain were drawn by the attractive prices for onward passage offered by English and Scottish shipping companies. Throughout the period of the great migration, Glasgow was a popular port for transmigrants heading for North America, especially New York, second only to Liverpool. This remained the case despite the alternative option of sailing directly to North America from Hamburg or Rotterdam, and even from the Baltic from 1903 onwards. Following a serious cholera outbreak in Hamburg in 1892, which led to over 8,000 deaths there, transmigration patterns within Britain changed dramatically. Most migrants reaching Glasgow did not dock at Leith on the east coast of Scotland but landed instead in the English ports of Grimsby or Hull, where trains were at hand to transport

⁶² Kenneth Collins, *Go and Learn*, pp. 83-97.

⁶³ Kenneth Collins, "Joseph Schorstein: R D Laing's Rabbi," *Journal of the History of Psychiatry*, June 2008, 19 (74:2), pp. 185-201. Kenneth Collins, The Glasgow Department of 'Psycho-Semantics' 1940-1960: "The Jewish Thought of Joseph Schorstein and Karl Abenheimer," *Jewish Historical Studies*, 45, pp. 23-40.

them to Liverpool or Glasgow. The numbers of transmigrants travelling via Glasgow peaked in 1906 and 1907, due to the Allan Line's success in drawing passengers to Glasgow to sail its North America routes.

Conclusion

This project set out to construct a detailed demographic and genealogical profile of a national Jewish community. With its accurate detailing of community size, population growth, movement, settlement and dispersal, a picture of the Jewish community in Scotland has emerged which has challenged and changed many previously held perceptions. The statistics for births, marriages and deaths have shown how natural growth fuelled an increase in community size after immigration tailed off after 1914. It has shown how the number of Jews in Scotland has contracted dramatically in recent decades, as an ageing population produced an excess of deaths over births and younger elements moved elsewhere. The study has also indicated the attachment of immigrant Jews to religious life even in the small centres around the country, where groups of just thirty people were enough to establish a community with a synagogue and a minister. The review of digitised newspaper archives has revealed how Jewish events were recorded in the national and local Scottish press and has cast fascinating new light on the beginnings of Jewish life in the country. In brief, our understanding of the history and the social narrative of Scottish Jewry has been decisively revised.

About the Authors

Dr. Kenneth Collins, formerly a general medical practitioner in Glasgow is currently Visiting Professor in Medical History at the Medical Faculty of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and Senior Research Fellow, Centre for the History of Medicine, University of Glasgow. He has published widely on the history of the Jews in Scotland and is Chairman of the Scottish Jewish Archives Centre.

Dr. Neville Lamdan studied at Glasgow University, Dropsie College, Philadelphia, and Oxford University (D.Phil. 1965). A retired Ambassador, he served in the British Foreign and Commonwealth Office (1965-1971) and the Israeli Foreign Ministry (1973-2003). He helped found the International Institute for Jewish Genealogy in 2006 and is currently its Chair. He is a well-known proponent of the scientific study of genealogy and its recognition as an academic discipline.

Michael Tobias studied at Glasgow and Strathclyde Universities and qualified as a Fellow of the Faculty of Actuaries. He is Vice President Programming of JewishGen, Inc., and Co-Founder and Board Member of Jewish Records Indexing – Poland. He was Database matching consultant to the International Commission on Holocaust Era Insurance Claims. He was awarded the International Association of Jewish Genealogical Societies Lifetime Achievement award in Washington in 2011.

Discussion Questions

This project has produced detailed demographic and genealogical information on the Jewish community of Scotland since its inception 200 years ago and has permitted comparison with national Scottish data obtained from birth, marriage, and death records and from Census information. We pose here some discussion questions that arise from the study and its findings:

1. The methodology in this study was designed to identify members of a specific religious group. Would it need to be modified to apply to members of a national or ethnic group and, if so, how?
2. Could the approach in this study apply to national Jewish communities of similar size such as Denmark and Switzerland, or larger Jewish communities whose geographical roots are similar to those of Scotland, such as South Africa?
3. Could the data generated by this study be used to build a Family Tree of Scottish Jewry and if so, what would be its likely characteristics?
4. Like many other countries in Europe, Scotland has experienced significant immigration over the past decades. These communities, mainly from the Indian sub-continent and from Poland, have distinctive national and religious affiliations, and experience the same pressures of settlement, dispersal and acculturation. Can the Jewish experience in Scotland serve as a model for their integration into Scottish society and its life?

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“[Untitled]”
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by Carlos Ramírez

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The Genealogist's Information World: Creating Information in the Pursuit of a Hobby

Crystal Fulton
University College Dublin, Ireland

Abstract

Creating information, including how and why people build something new with information, has long been part of our lives and offers an important research focus. The creation of information may occur in a variety of contexts, including genealogy. However, we may overlook this creative process in the context of genealogy, a hobby often associated with older adults, whereas we may commonly associate creating information with user-generated content in participative online venues. This article explores how and why genealogists may participate in information creation, in particular in the pursuit of their family histories. Interviews with genealogists suggest they often use their collective genealogical research to create something new. A model of genealogists' information creation may help us understand the creative process within this hobby.

Keywords: genealogy, hobbies, leisure, information creation, older adults, user-generated content

Introduction

Creating information, including how and why people build something new with information, has long been part of our lives and offers an important research focus. The creation of information may occur in a variety of contexts. However, we may overlook this creative process in the context of genealogy, a hobby often associated with older adults (e.g., Kuglin, 2004), whereas we may commonly associate creating information with user-generated content in participative online venues. Considering how genealogists use their research, including information they locate and patterns of finding information, to create something new may enrich our understanding of their hobby and the genealogist's information world. In this article, we explore genealogists' interactions with information to understand their process of information creation in the context of their hobby.

Genealogists and Information

Genealogy has long existed as a pastime or hobby. However, genealogy has deeper meaning for enthusiasts and offers a means of serious leisure (Fulton, 2009a, 2009b). Serious leisure is a “systematic pursuit of an amateur, hobbyist, or volunteer core activity that captivates the participant with its challenges and complexity” (Stebbins, 2009; see also Stebbins, 1992, 2007). Genealogists are devoted researchers, who are often so immersed in their hobby that they treat the hobby as a commitment, much as one would do paid employment (Fulton, 2005, 2009a, 2009b).

Knowledge of information, as well as of pathways to information through sources and people are critical features of the hobby. For instance, Duff & Johnson (2003) reported that genealogists often use archival records and interactions with each other to resolve complex genealogical information problems. Genealogists commit themselves to their hobby community, taking advice from one another (Duff & Johnson, 2003) and often sharing information with expectations of reciprocal sharing (Fulton, 2005, 2009a). While genealogists have traditionally used archives, libraries, and other physical repositories of information, they have increasingly adopted technologies, such as family tree software, databases, and the Internet to facilitate their research. For instance, a survey Lucy (2015) conducted found that genealogists are increasingly using technology and the Internet to find and share information rather than visit institutions holding physical documents.

Various researchers have mapped the genealogical research process. Duff & Johnson (2003) suggested that genealogy is completed as an iterative process, changing problem-solving strategy as needed to continue to gather information. Friday (2014) offered a circular pattern of research, in which the genealogist is involved in actions, strategies and outcomes that may lead to new actions. Taking more of a skills level approach, Banville (2014) divided genealogists into three categories: (1) the filiation genealogist, (2) the genealogist researcher, and (3) the master genealogist. The filiation genealogist conducts research in primary and secondary sources to produce a pedigree chart. The genealogist researcher takes this first level of genealogical participation further, not only finding family information, but also solving complex genealogical problems and often collecting information found in a family history. The master genealogist possesses the skills of the previous two categories, completes complex information searching, and has high-level analytical skills. The master genealogist’s work leads to such outputs as publications, conferences, training, and major research projects for private and public organisations. According to Banville (2014), most genealogists fit into categories one and two.

Researchers have further recognised genealogy as a means of creating social identity (e.g., Banville, 2014; Bishop, 2005). According to Bishop (2005), the genealogist is not only a collector of information, but also a storyteller who connects the information gathered with the past. Bottero (2015) also conceptualises genealogy as “storying of family histories” related to leisure, historical research, and information processing. Similar to Bishop (2005), Bottero (2015) describes identity is subjectively constructed through the development of a family history, in which the genealogist selects and adds information to the story of a family. Land (2012) refers to genealogists as a community of practice; genealogists may work together to generate a collective output, for instance, to create indexes to information or databases (e.g., Bishop, 2005; volunteer genealogy projects online, such as Free BMDs, <http://www.freebmd.org.uk>, and Automated Genealogy, <http://automatedgenealogy.com/census>, which captures Canadian census data).

Research about genealogy reveals it to be a rich and complex information space, involving an array of information sources, interactions with information requiring significant information literacy skills, and hobby-specific communication patterns around locating and sharing information. While scholars have often dismissed genealogy as an amateur activity (e.g., Bishop, 2005), recently, there has been a call for the establishment of genealogy as an academic multidisciplinary field of research, offering a taxonomy to frame the area and involving scholars from other subject areas to develop the new field (Herskovitz, 2012).

Creating Something New With Information

While some researchers have alluded to creativity as a component of hobby activities, they have not necessarily identified nor explored creativity as a discrete process or as an outcome of interacting with information. For example, Cox and Blake (2011) observe that food bloggers take inspiration from existing information to create new information sources. They compare the overall information behaviour of food bloggers with similar behaviours observed in other studies, equating creativity with inspiration and the process of discovery of new items relevant to a hobby, rather than with the act of creating of something new.

Significantly, a person who creates information may or may not view themselves as creating information or engaging in creative practices. Cox and Blake (2011) significantly observed that food blogging participants saw their blogging as creative, but did not present their hobby as a creative activity. This raises the questions around cognisance of creativity, motivations, and purposed versus incidental creation. Are hobbyists aware of their creative behaviours or are they accidentally or incidentally creative? What motivates purposed creation of information? How and when do genealogists, for instance, creative information?

Older Adults, Creative Information Practices, and Hobbies

The ways in which older adults, which the World Health Organization defines as 50 plus years of age (WHO, <http://www.who.int/healthinfo/survey/ageingdefholder/en>), interact with information is a growing area of interest in many subject areas. Ongoing research efforts across disciplines have attempted to address problems such as social isolation, poverty, health, and successful aging. As numbers of adults in retirement and with available time to spend on non-work activities increase, these questions are similarly gaining priority. Amateur genealogists form one such group, often retired or in the later stages of a career; as a result, they often have time to devote to lifelong learning of information and technical skills in support of their hobby.

Interestingly, older adults are not usually associated with creating information. There is often a generational association with creation of content, for example with online activities which are often perceived to be the purvey of the younger person. However, some researchers have explored the potential for the older adult to contribute to the creation of content (e.g., Karahasanovic *et al.*, 2009). In addition, older adults increasingly adopt new technologies to engage with information; for example, the Pew Internet Study (Smith, 2014) found that “59% of seniors report they go online,” but that “seniors continue to lag behind younger Americans when it comes to tech adoption.”

Importantly for older adults, hobbies offer a significant opportunity for them to participate in both online and offline contexts. Otterbourg (2008) reported that many people are late-

blooming hobbyists, taking up hobbies for the first time in middle or older ages. Hobbies facilitate creative expression, which may not have been previously possible for individuals, and provide activities to occupy time spent in work prior to retirement (Otterbourg, 2008). Kankainen & Lehtinen (2011) found that creative personal projects, combined with interactive media technology design, support an active life in older ages.

Research Questions

This article explores hobbyists' creation of information in the pursuit of hobby activities, using the active hobby of genealogy as an example. Research questions included the following:

- What information did genealogists create?
- How did genealogists create information?
- What were the motivations behind creating information?
- Was creation of information purposed or incidental?
- Was creation of information an individual or group behaviour or both?

Method

Approach

For the purposes of this article, the researcher revisited the interview data from two previous research studies focused on the information behaviour of genealogists researching their Irish roots to explore the theme of information creation, which emerged from discussions with participants about their information seeking. Complementary, ongoing studies about hobbyists and their creation of something new through their interactions with information parallel this new analysis. In the current piece, the context of genealogy offered a unique point of exploration, drawing on the experiences of older hobbyists.

Amateur genealogists participated in semi-structured interviews in these studies. In the first study, telephone interviews with participants facilitated access to participants who lived in world locations distant from the study location. In the second study, in-depth face-to-face interviews with amateur genealogists located in Ontario, Canada provided insight into the amateur genealogist's information world. We audio-recorded all interviews.

Participant Selection and Numbers

We located participants through snowball sampling. Study advertisements appeared on the web site for the studies and genealogists referred the study to others in their genealogical circle. In the first study, a total of 85 amateur genealogists responded to an initial survey about their genealogy, from which twenty-four agreed to participate further in telephone interviews. These interviewees hailed from regions where Irish people migrated en masse to avoid problems, such as famine, these locations including some of the major Irish Diaspora destinations of Australia, North America and the United Kingdom. In the second study, a total of 29 amateur genealogists, located in Ontario, Canada and searching for their Irish ancestry, participated in in-depth, face-to-face interviews.

The total number of interviews across the two studies was 53. Participant numbers fall within the guidelines suggested by qualitative research experts (e.g., Miles and Huberman, 1994) and proved sufficient to achieve saturation in data.

Data Analyses

We coded interview data using a constant comparative analysis to identify patterns of communication and interaction with information, as well as links between and among genealogists, the given hobby, and civic interaction.

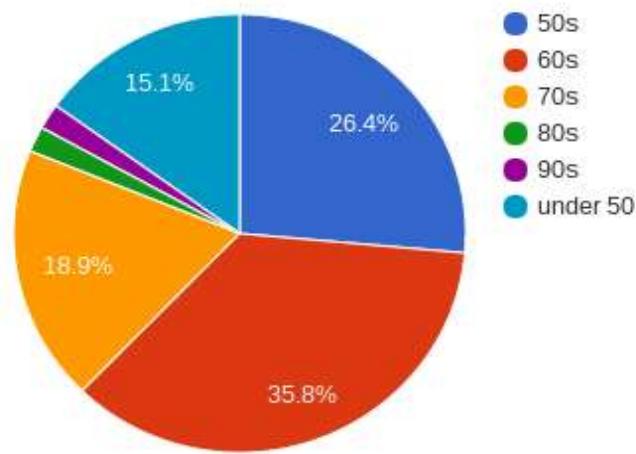
Participant Profiles

Participant profiles for the two parts of this study were largely similar and we have merged these data.

Age

Nearly all participants across the two studies were over the age of 50 years, with the largest group aged in their 60s, as reflected in Figure 1 below:

Fig. 1: Genealogists' Age Groups



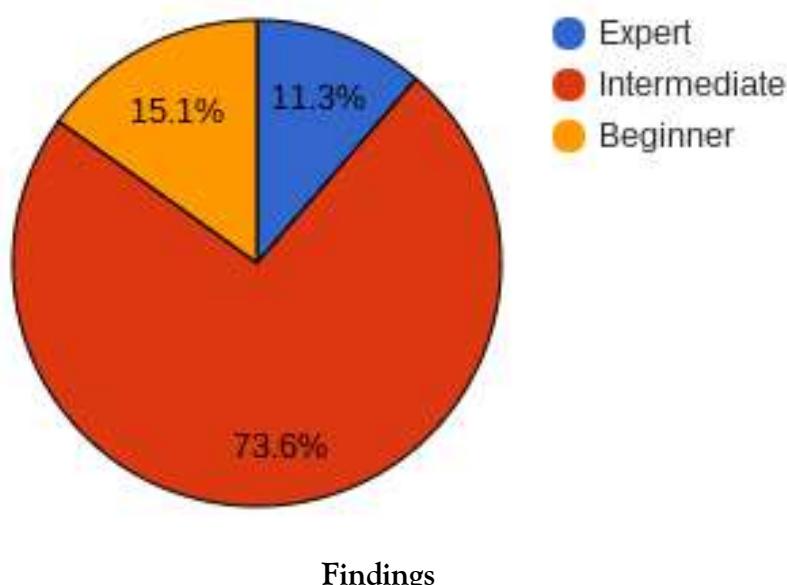
The participation of genealogists over the age of 50 was in keeping with the work of other researchers (e.g., Kuglin, 2004; Hendry, 2015).

Information Skills

All participants were amateur genealogists. The majority of participants (seventy-four per cent) were well educated, having achieved one or more higher education qualifications. Nearly all participants were in employment or retired from positions that required at least basic, and

often more advanced information skills, e.g., banking, health services, education, and legal services. Despite qualifications and experience, only a few participants considered themselves expert researchers. Participants most often evaluated their genealogical research expertise at an intermediate level (see Figure 2).

Fig. 2 Genealogists' Self-Evaluation of Research Expertise



Creating Pathways to Information

Irish genealogy sources have often been perceived to be somewhat fragmented. For instance, various important historical sources were lost or damaged over hundreds of years. In some instances, no collection of information might have occurred. Genealogists often cite the well-known example of the fire in the Four Courts during the Civil War in 1922 as a stumbling block, although other sources do exist as alternative sources which can provide some success. In addition, while genealogical information, such as census data, civil registrations, and parish records, has been digitized in some countries through national efforts or through the work of volunteers, these critical genealogical sources in Ireland are often in the process of some digitisation or remain less accessible by comparison. For instance, the 1901 and 1911 census records have been part of a digitisation project between Ireland and Canada, offering free online access to this information; many other historical records remain in manuscript or microfilm formats. As a result, some may consider Irish genealogy to be quite challenging. As one genealogist in this study summed up, "I'm having a heck of a time with Ireland!"

Genealogists reported characteristically formal, accepted means of acquiring information or normative community behaviours. For example, in genealogy circles, learning about and utilizing historical records were activities expected of hobby participants, requiring learning of research skills to locate and interpret information. The nature of genealogy demands knowledge of information organization and research skills for effective hobby participation. Amateur genealogists found that they needed to interact effectively with existing systems, ranging from

library and archive catalogues to government information gathering and dissemination processes, such as birth, death, and marriage registrations, in order to extract as much information relevant to their queries as possible.

For those genealogists who found the Irish records system to be different from their experience of other records systems, they found it essential to think creatively about pathways to information. While formal information systems, such as library and archive collections, remained important to genealogists' acquisition of information, so too was thinking beyond established pathways to information. The realization that there was no one single place to find all information needed was central to research; as one genealogist explained:

[People think] there's some particular channel to get information, but there isn't. There's just lots of different approaches . . . I also deal with lots of other things which I have to start thinking about other ways to get information...And so, um, there's no real direct route.

Using traditional sources and pathways to information in this hobby formed a baseline from which genealogists could build upon creatively to enrich their information seeking. Genealogists cited using multiple sources and pathways to information as important strategies. As one genealogist observed:

You have to attack it [family tree research] from multiple angles. No one source is going to give you all the information you need. Or very often, another source will confirm the information you have.

Following many pathways could increase one's chances of finding information because one source or piece of information might not help one find a particular ancestor. As one genealogist observed, "Oh boy, I -- it's just, it's a detective thing. You've just got to look everywhere you can for a clue."

When genealogists found themselves stalled in their research, they adopted creative approaches to jumpstarting their work. Expanding a search, using formal sources, could facilitate information finding; for example, when one genealogist could not find an ancestor in a county where she thought she would logically find that person, she started scanning records for surrounding counties, explaining her approach as follows:

They didn't keep all the records in the same parish. And, and some parishes have since disappeared and you've got to really be prepared to expand your search, I think... That's what I'm doing now. I'm going through different counties even to see if they might have - records might have been a lot better. I haven't found anything so far.

Another genealogist spoke of searching laterally to overcome stumbling blocks:

I've been looking for my, one of my grandfather's brothers. He was a, he was a, he'd been in the United States but I'm all but, I do a lot of lateral searches...because sometimes when I do a direct line I can't find the information I'm looking for...so I do a lateral search for something that will give me a clue.

Overall, by thinking about problem-solving creatively, genealogists were able to expand their opportunities to locate information.

Genealogists also spoke of how they circumvented formal sources and pathways to information. Forging new and creative approaches to solving information problems associated with one's genealogy offered hope for breakthroughs in information seeking. For instance, having one's DNA analyzed could provide fresh clues to family connections; one genealogist explained that he had not only his own DNA analyzed but also that of several potential relatives at a family gathering. He explained his reasoning as follows:

What I was hoping for was that, well I don't know what I was hoping for. I was thinking that ours [DNA results] were going to be exactly the same, that eventually, if you analyze enough of them, you get some idea of how far back the common ancestor was.

In this case, the genealogist used his background in forensic science to assist in breaking through barriers in family tree development.

Creating Information Outputs

Incidents of creation also occurred as hobby outputs throughout hobby processes. Genealogists noted traditionally anticipated hobby outputs, as well as other creative individual and group efforts at offering something new and tangible. Self-identifying hobby outputs as creative acts depended on the type output, with genealogists observing greater acts of creativity in particular hobby outputs, as outlined below.

Creative Hobby Outputs

Genealogists' work often resulted in creative outputs, that is in the creation of something new following involvement in hobby activities and interaction with the hobby community. Genealogists identified the act of collecting their ancestors and building a family history as their primary hobby output; while they associated these tasks with gathering and documenting activities, they did not explicitly label these tasks as creative acts. They proudly referred to their personal individual contributions when they channelled their family research into particular unique outputs, for example, creation of artefacts displaying their research (poster-type tree of family names, scrapbooking, surname surveys, cemetery surveys, monographs about a particular family lineage, etc.). Genealogists considered their contributions to group undertakings, ranging from town histories to national census and births-deaths-marriages databases, to be collective participation, which was creative in the coming together of individuals to pool information, but more gathering and documenting of information in execution.

Documenting as an Act of Creation

Genealogists noted the importance of documenting their families. Documentation provided an official output of hard work. To emphasize the significance, genealogists repeatedly observed their particular methods of collecting and managing the information they found. For

instance, one genealogist spoke about the importance of creating the story of their family, including multi-tasking to search for and locate information, using genealogy software to organize family relations, filing information, and writing the story of the family. As one genealogist observed, they spent significant time “working on the Family Tree program, or writing up the story of the family, or filing my material.”

Personal Systems for Managing Information

In connection with documenting family histories, genealogists organized information according to their personal wishes. For example, scraps of paper facilitated immediate note taking; one genealogist explained how she kept these scraps of paper as a record of her research, organizing this material in plastic wallets:

I tend to write bits on scrap bits of paper beside me. But I'm getting better at that. I've got this - one day, not very long ago, two of my daughters who are super organisers - they said, “Mum, you've got, you've got to organise this,” and so they made me go out and get four wallets. And so all these bits of scrap paper for each member of the family they've made me put into a wallet, so I now just pull a wallet out, you know.

Others reported scrapbooking information and records found, adding to this photographs and other items to document their findings. Genealogists also digitized their research. Genealogical software packages enabled documentation of records, relationships, and information gaps remaining to be researched and resolved.

Creatively Sharing Family History Research

Sharing information was a multi-purposed activity intended for dissemination of information and development of connections who might offer information reciprocally (see Fulton, 2009a). Importantly, sharing encouraged some to think carefully and creatively about how to present outputs. For example, some genealogists posted their work to web sites devoted to their family history, with some reporting learning new skills to enable their vision of their research outputs. As one genealogist noted:

I spend a lot of time on the computer...putting things into files and working on the website. I'm taking a course in website development at the local community college.

Similar to quilting hobbyists, (Gainor, 2009), sharing creatively presented genealogical outputs online was part of belonging and contributing to a wider hobbyist community.

Creating a Generational Hobby

Genealogists spoke of the creation of a family history as something for future generations to have and for this creation to become generational. As one genealogist explained, the family history was a generational process, with family members passing information from generation to generation:

My grandfather had a - it was almost like a Rosetta Stone - my grandfather had written down an account, in 1864 as his father lay dying. My grandfather was the youngest in the family, and so his father was telling him about the family history, and, including the fact that how they were all, his father, his grandfather and his great-grandfather were all buried at the, the graveyard in XXXX which is North-West of XXXX [location in Ireland].

The feeling that the hobby had impact across generations was strong, similar to Yakel and Torres' (2007) genealogists who derived a sense of identity from genealogical information. A genealogist in the current study, for example, reported that he felt he must keep his own work organized and well documented "*for the next generation.*"

In keeping with the idea of creating memory, some genealogists reported that they donated their research to formal repositories. For example, one genealogist reported donating a digital compilation of family names that they had researched to a local archive:

And I took down what I had to [local archive], yeah. And they were real happy with it...Just what I had done to that point. The computerized list of the family which was about twenty-seven pages and just a little history on what I'd done up to that point. And I left it with [name of lead archivist]... She was glad to get it 'cause it was somebody who lived in the area.

Again, genealogists viewed contributing to a collection as helping to build something, which would benefit themselves and other genealogists in the community.

Discussion

Genealogists in this study understood and utilised research processes suggestive of the high research expertise Friday (2014) and Kuglin (2004) reported. Although well educated, the majority of participants in this study evaluated their research expertise at an intermediate level, with a minority also stating that they researched at expert level. The level of expertise may have facilitated participant decision making to select and amass information, and then to organize and possibly create something new using that information.

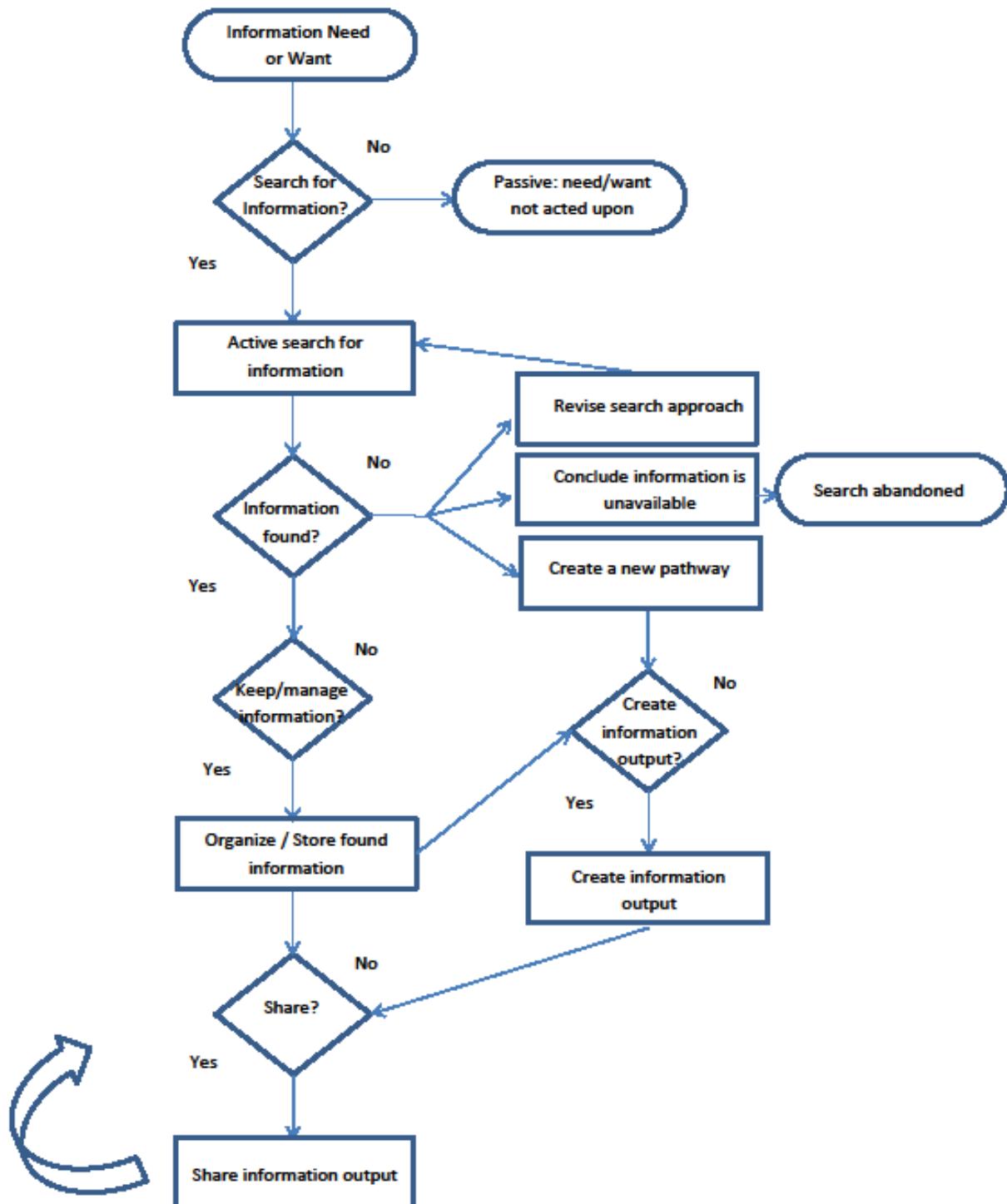
Importantly, genealogists in this study demonstrated their creativity in different ways, ranging from producing new sources to adopting alternative pathways through information. They were also often cognisant of taking new steps. In this sense, the genealogists in this study differed from the Cox and Blake's (2011) bloggers, who equated inspiration with creativity. The gaps in their information seeking motivated genealogists to create something new.

An Emerging Model of Information Creation

The collective experience of hobbyists from these two studies suggests that they may follow creative pathways to locating and using information. In addition, when genealogists could not find information to address an information need or want, they might also create the

information to satisfy that need. A model of these acts of creating something new to resolve a problem is shown in Figure 3.

Fig. 3: Genealogists' Creation of Information and Pathways to Information



As this model illustrates, the act of creating information can emerge from the recognition of an information need or want or from an unresolved information problem that active information seeking does not resolve. Lack of resolution may result from a variety of factors, including non-retrieval from a system or non-existence of the information. Each stage of the process is discussed below.

Information Need or Want

An information need or want initiates the information seeking process, which may lead to the creation of outputs. An information *need* is information that is required to progress a query. An information *want* is information that may be desirable but not essential to the query. For example, a genealogist may *need* information, such as date of birth or a full name to distinguish between two individuals who may seem similar. The genealogist may *want* information about the village where the person lived to help paint a picture of the person's life. For a genealogist, an information need or want may lead to a search for that information.

Search for Information

The decision to search for information involves a strategy for finding information and identification of a source, tool, or system that may contain the information, as well as the actual search itself. Sources and tools may involve a range of items, such as historical documents and indexes to records. Systems, including archives and libraries, may contain the information required.

Information Found, Organized, Stored

The genealogist will either find or not find the information sought. The genealogist may then organize and store the information found. The means of managing information may differ from genealogist to genealogist, according to personal needs and wishes. The genealogist may decide to use this organized information to create something new.

Information Not Found

The search may also result in no information found. The point at which information is not found can modify the genealogist's pathway through information. The genealogist may adopt a fresh approach to finding information, which may include using existing systems and sources or creating new pathways to information. The genealogist may also end the search at this point.

1. *Revised search approach or new strategy*

Where a search does not result in the retrieval of the information originally sought, the genealogist may revise their approach with a new strategy for finding the information, following existing routes to information acquisition.

2. Conclude information unavailable

The required information may then not found or may not exist. The issues noted in this paper with regard to Irish genealogical sources are relevant here; the genealogist may, for instance, decide that the information has been lost, destroyed, or not collected. At this point, the search may be abandoned.

3. Create a new pathway

Alternatively, the genealogist may decide to pursue information outside the confines of a given information system, continuing their search through informal channels or alternative systems and networks.

Creation of Information Output: Product or Pathway

The genealogist may decide to overcome the gap in information by assembling a body of information to create new sources or alternative knowledge systems, organized and experienced in multiple ways. New sources may include such items as family or community histories, surname studies, etc. The development of new systems, such as indexes to records, collections of various items, etc. can offer a new ways of conceptualizing a search for information.

As new pathways are formed by the amateur genealogist, it is possible that these pathways can become established, that is recognized pathways in the hobby. Examples of such pathways include Free BMDs (<http://www.freebmd.org.uk>) in the UK and the Automated Genealogy project (<http://automatedgenealogy.com/census>) in Canada; in these cases, amateur genealogists committed themselves to creating and contributing to a large scale documentation of records, such as census data, civil registration, and parish records. This changing of role from information seeker to information creator may occur at multiple stages in this process, depending on availability of information and query resolution at different points of the process.

Sharing of Information

After the steps to organize and store found information or to create information, the genealogist may decide to share their work. For instance, the genealogist, alone or in groups, may publish the database they have developed or the community history they have written, etc. in printed and/or online formats.

Looping back to Other Stages of the Process

While the model may seem quite linear, the process is more aptly described as fluid and circular in places. At various points in this model, the genealogist may decide to loop backward or forward to different stages of activity one or many times. For instance, finding information or creating something new because of a search outcome may lead the genealogist to consider new strategies, additional sources, and new searches. The genealogist may even decide to embark on solving an entirely new problem or query.

Genealogy, Older Adults, and Creation of Information

One of the interesting aspects of information creation in this study was the age demographic associated with this activity. The concept of participative creation of information is most often associated with younger people and their interaction with technologically-mediated spaces (e.g., Harrison & Barthel, 2009). In addition, researchers have observed that younger people are more likely to function as information consumers, as opposed to content creators (e.g., van Dijck, 2009). However, the older adults in this study revealed that they not only can but do create information products and pathways through information. Genealogists offer a useful group for considering how this process of creating something new actually does and can happen. Findings in this study suggest implications for studying other hobbyists who may be retired, as well as the information literacy and social connections of older adults, where these issues may have an impact on health as we age (e.g., Asla & Williamson, 2013).

Conclusion and Opportunities for Exploring Information Creation Further

We note that this model is a work in progress. Further testing with different individuals and groups in varied contexts is an obvious requirement, which will come in time. This iteration of the model provides greater understanding of how individuals may approach information problems when information is not available for whatever reason. There is also a need to explore the act of creation for creation's sake, adding to the current model, which addresses information creation as a response to an information problem. Importantly, the model in this article provides a first step in developing our understanding of our information behaviour outside the usual information-seeking role, and importantly, the significant role older adults can play in information creation.

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About the Author

Crystal Fulton, Ph.D. (Crystal.Fulton@ucd.ie), is a Senior Lecturer in the School of Information and Communication Studies at University College Dublin, Dublin, Ireland. She researches in the field of Information Behavior, studying the interactions between people, information, and technologies in everyday and workplace settings. Her work into the leisure pursuits of various groups explores connections among hobbies, information literacy, community development and social participation.

Discussion Questions

1. What questions about creativity and the act of creating something new arose for you in this study?
2. What other methodological approaches might be useful for exploring how genealogists interact with information?
3. How can genealogists' use and creation of information help institutions interact with and learn from these hobbyists?

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Life Forward

Colonel Charles H. May

United States Army



Colonel Charles H. May graduated from the University of North Florida. He has served in assignments in Alaska, Florida, Hawaii, Missouri, Afghanistan, (Guantanamo Bay) Cuba, and Panama, among others. Currently, he is Military Deputy, Natick Soldier Research, Development and Engineering Center, Natick, Massachusetts. His awards and decorations include the Meritorious Service Medal, Joint Services Commendation Medal, Air Assault badge, and the Diving Officer insignia.

Interview

by Hagai Gringarten

Q1. Life is about stories. Do you have a favorite story you use as an icebreaker?

As a young man in Ohio in 1956, my father was departing the YMCA. In those days, the YMCA provided billets for individuals who were new to an area. The YMCA was not overly expensive, and it provided shelter and a safe haven for men who were moving and on the go, trying to make it in those early post WWII days. My Father had recently emigrated from England to the U.S.A. for employment in the telecommunications industry.

One evening he decided to go for a stroll. Upon stepping on to the outside stairs of the entrance to the YMCA, he dutifully looked to his left and then to his right. To his right, he could see a gasoline filling station, and to the left the lights of the shops and businesses that adorned the downtown street. For some reason, he chose left and proceeded to walk on. During the first two to three hundred yards, he heard and felt the effects of a very large and intense explosion. The entire establishment including the street was destroyed with all in the span of the explosion either critically injured or mortally wounded.

If my father had decided to walk to his right that fateful evening, he would have been one of the critically injured or mortally wounded. He told me this story one more than one occasion, and it stays with me to this day. I am often reminded of this tale and do my very best to apply it in all I tackle and accomplish.

Q2. What are the top three characteristics that contributed to your success?

- Continue to push. Never give up. Do not let those around you bring you down, or to quote in the Latin: “*Illegitimi non carborundum.*”
- Honor, Integrity, Personal Courage – these are great guides to live by. I recommend you instill these in your daily life and all actions. Your ability to make the organization shine will reflect well on you. If you are working on ‘busy work’ that has no value then you may be creating only heat; “Do not be a friction generator.”
- Value, Value, and More Value should be the #1 pursuit.

Q3. What life-changing events or decisions have guided your career?

The death of my father.

My father always stated, “Get stuck into a deal, and do not break from that deal unless you are locked into an equal or better deal. No air gaps.” Deal means job or employment. Do not waste time on pursuits that will not promote you into a real employment status that will help achieve life goals.

Marriage and having a family – The single person is not tied down with responsibilities, life, health, financial, long term health, long term retirement, second career, short and long term financial investing, and readiness.

Q4. Tell us of any expressions your parents often repeated with you.

“*Illegitimi non carborundum,*” or “Stay the course and continue to work.”

- Be positive and productive.
- Always have a viable back up plan.

Q5. What is the biggest misconception about how to achieve success?

Only individuals with formal college training will be successful.

Success is in the eye of the beholder.

- can be related to or based upon the time a decision is or is not made;
- can be tied directly to opportunities that were or were not capitalized on;
- can be attributed to the research conducted and the educated actions taken based on the research;
- can be attributed to great timing and very good fortune or luck;
- can be based on staying the course and putting up with daily personalities and challenges versus moving from one endeavor to another trying to find greener pastures through bouncing from place to place.

Q6. What books have you read lately?

William Manchester, *The Last Lion: Winston Spencer Churchill*. New York, NY: Little, Brown & Co., 1983 and 2012.

Volume 1, *Visions of Glory, 1874-1932*.

Volume 2, *Alone, 1932-1940*.

Volume 3, *Defender of the Realm, 1940-1965*.

Q7. Imagine your phone rings, and it's you from 10 years ago. If you only had a minute to talk, what would you say?

Invest in Altria (MO), McDonalds (MCD), and Apple (APL).

Q8. What elevator speech would you give children about success in life?

I believe I would refer to the statements listed in question 5.

Q9. What is the best advice you have ever received, and who gave it to you?

You have to make decisions, and in some cases judgment calls, based on no information, only the present environment – based on the situation at hand. The person who gave it to me was Christopher Charles May, my father.

Q10. What would you like to see as your life's legacy?

A loving husband and a loving father.

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Book Review

Book Details

Navarrete, W., & Espino, M. D. (2015). *Genealogía Cubana: San Isidoro de Holguín: Padrón de las casas y familias de este Pueblo de San Isidoro de Holguín hecho en el mes de Febrero del año del Señor del 1735*. Valencia: Aduana Vieja. ISBN: 978-84-942785-6-3.

Reviewer

Lourdes Del Pino, M.S.I.E.

Synopsis and Evaluation

In the early days after the discovery of the New World, the Conquistadores were rewarded with land grants, and what is now the city of Holguín in the Province of Oriente, Cuba, was a land grant given around 1530 to García de Holguín, a conquistador from Extremadura, Spain. Given the lack of documentation, little was known about the land's inhabitants until the 1700s, when its church was founded and a thriving community settled around it.

The book is the product of exhaustive research into the origins of the founding families of the town of Holguín, based on the Census of 1735, and enriched with information compiled from sacramental and notarial records. These documents describe the families, their households, including servants and slaves, and in many cases generations of the families' ancestors and descendants. It is the first book of its nature, based on rigorous research of primary sources in the Archivo General de Indias, in Seville, notarial and genealogical records from the Archivo Municipal de Historia of Holguín and the Archivo Nacional de Cuba, and sacramental records of the church of San Isidoro. This book is an invaluable contribution to the history of Cuba as well as a treasure of genealogical data.

In the Author's Own Words

Translation: "The difficulty presented by this document [the Census of 1735] is in accurately identifying the persons tallied in the 114 houses. The information is incomplete and in some cases the surnames have not been properly transcribed. It is because of this that we were compelled to re-edit this document . . . and add the complementary data that enriches, expands and amends it" (p. 13).

Reviewer's Details

Lourdes Del Pino, M.S.I.E. (ldelpino@mac.com) holds a Master of Science degree from the University of Miami and is now Vice President of the Cuban Genealogy Club of Miami. Her research interests focus mainly on the early years of the colonization of Cuba and the development of its population.

To Cite this Review

Del Pino, L. (2016, Spring). Review of *Genealogía Cubana: San Isidoro de Holguín: Padrón de las casas y familias de este Pueblo de San Isidoro de Holguín hecho en el mes de Febrero del año del Señor del 1735*, by W. Navarrete, & M. D. Espino. *Journal of Multidisciplinary Research*, 8(1), 105-106.

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Book Review

Book Details

Dirda, M. (2015). *Browsings: A year of reading, collecting, and living with books*. New York: Pegasus Books, 246 pages, \$24.95, hardcover, ISBN: 9781605988443.

Reviewer

The Reverend Jonathan Roach, Ph.D.

Synopsis and Evaluation

Writing a book review about a book by one of the premier critics in the United States, if not the world, requires living dangerously. It demands vivid nouns and kick-ass verbs. Not the usual fare for an academic book review. The traditional academic review contains conventional fodder, not wild thistle, rye, and crabgrass, but Michael Dirda's *Browsings: A Year of Reading, Collecting, and Living with Book* is not the usual fare for an academic book review. It compels the reviewer to break rules and converse with the book—as it converses with books.

Dirda's tome contains the essays he published each Friday, from February 2012 until February 2013, for the homepage of *The American Scholar*. Dirda, the 1993 Pulitzer Prize winner for criticism, writes a weekly column for *The Washington Post*, and has authored a memoir, four other essay collections, won the 2012 Edgar Award for best critical/biographical work, earned a Fulbright Fellowship, and on and on

Despite having the highest honors from Oberlin College and a Ph.D. in comparative literature from Cornell, Dirda fathers readable prose. His language flows like a conservation with your best friend. Dirda doesn't pile language higher and deeper. He allows it to flow free and without barriers between him and the reader. As to his style, he notes, "Thoreau was my earliest model—as it was E. B. White's—and I seem locked into a plain, homespun style, albeit one gussied up with the borrowed finery (now where's that from?) of pervasive quotation and allusion" (p. 178). He makes his prose seem effortless, but he explains that "when I rewrite—and sometimes I'll spend hours making a piece sound as if it had been tossed off as easily as Byron scribbled his letters—I carefully go over every sentence" (p. 176). You don't read Dirda's prose; you experience it.

The essays in *Browsings* explore topics from titles to notebook paper and pens; from writer's block to disappearing book sales; from music, movies, journals, and magazines to grammar, language, and words; and from small presses and neglected books to life through the lens of a bookman. And he dwells extensively on his favorite age of fiction—the Age of Great

Storytellers, from the late 19th to early 20th century (1875-1930)—calling readers to follow their bliss in books as the Age of Great Storytellers embodies Dirda's bliss. Although he doesn't restrict himself to only this age—references to Paolo Bacigalupi's *The Windup Girl* and Italo Calvino's *The Castle of Crossed Destinies* jump to mind—his command of these authors and titles ripple across the essays. He champions out-of-print titles and neglected authors that the academy and popular reading trends have left in the dustbin.

Far from a being a lockstep parade of books, these essays trot out a cast of well-developed characters that will leave many novelists salivating. Dirda develops characters with more realism than many writers can develop in 1,000 pages of narrative. He paints characters such as his mother (pp. 106 and 131), wife, Irv Matus (p. 204), Everett Bleiler, Jacques Barzun, Seamus the Wonder Dog (p. 14), and his father (p. 90) with incredible depth and complexity.

Although Dirda will make even the most dedicated of bibliophiles feel inadequate for not knowing more than a fraction of the authors and titles he mentions, readers will forgive him his sins, as we have forgiven Yeats, for writing well. Readers will even forgive him for not loving every title and author they love. Personally, I forgive him for his unnecessary swipe against my beloved Virginia Woolf, whom he libels as “too much brocade for my taste” (p. 178).

Dirda's rant in “Rocky Mountain Low” (p. 77) and his prescription in “A Positively, Final Appearance” (p. 231) are particularly entertaining and enlightening. In “Rocky Mountain Low,” Dirda illustrates the power of the Great Age of Storytelling by moving between a first- and third-person narration with foreshadowing, concrete details, and literary reference to the left and right. In “A Positively, Final Appearance,” Dirda exhorts readers and writers to (1) read (and write) for fun; (2) go boldly where they haven't gone before and try “unexpected books, old books, neglected books, genre books, upsetting books, downright strange books” (p. 232); and (3) build a personal library because “a personal library is a reflection of who you are and who you want to be, of what you value and what you desire, of how much you know and how much more you'd like to know” (p. 233). He summons readers back to the book.

What can the academic community learn from Dirda through *Browsings*? Academics read, often tens of thousands of pages every year. But Dirda's call for readers to follow their bliss admonishes readers who have lost their passion to get lost in a good story, for the joy of reading—not for grading, or peer review, or to develop an argument—but reading for joy as a powerful force for the good of the human mind and society. In the age of the specialist, or even sub-specialist, Dirda reminds the academic community of the power of the generalist. Literature is much more than a mirror reflecting the world, it is a world: the world that was, the world that is, and a world that might be.

In the Author's Own Words

“I realized that my only real talent can be reduced to a single word: doggedness. I'm sometimes willing to put in vast, even inordinate amounts of time if I find a project that interests me. I will then study with Talmudic devotion, consult experts, adopt training regimes that would inspire Olympians, and then, suddenly, drop whatever it is and move on” (p. 62).

“My house itself is a shambles, being awash in vinyl LPs, classic men's clothing, manual typewriters, luggage of all kinds, scores of thrift-shop neckties and quite a few books. Okay, thousand of books. Many of them in boxes. In the basement. I've actually got six hulking double-sided bookcases, purchased from Borders when they went out of business, just sitting in my

garage, waiting for a space to put them in. My wife draws the line the dining room, even though we could easily eat our meals on trays" (p. 63).

Reviewer's Details

The Reverend Jonathan Roach, Ph.D. (jroach@stu.edu), is the Interim Dean of the Library at St. Thomas University. He holds a Ph.D. in practical theology from St. Thomas University, a Master of Library and Information Science from Wayne State University, and a Master of Divinity from Ecumenical Theological Seminary. He is ordained clergy in the National Association of Congregational Christian Churches and is currently working in the area of clergy burnout within a contextual theology of work.

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“[Untitled]”
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by Carlos Ramírez

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Book Review

Book Details

Weller, C. E. (2015). *Retirement on the rocks: Why Americans can't get ahead and how new savings policies can help*. Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 236 pages, \$50.00, hardcover, ISBN: 9781137395627.

Reviewer

Richard F. Works, M.B.A.

Synopsis and Evaluation

This book offers a thorough overview of the issues in retirement planning by an expert in the field. Author Christian E. Weller is a Senior Fellow at the Center for American Progress and a professor of public policy at the University of Massachusetts in Boston. He received a Ph.D. in economics from the University of Massachusetts, Amherst. Weller's areas of expertise include private pensions, Social Security, retirement income security, wealth inequality and asset development, financial institutions, and international economic development.

In Chapter 1, the author demonstrates how retirement savings are affected by cycles of unemployment. These effects are influenced by public policy, and therefore need to be addressed through policy interventions. Determining one's ability to pay for basic living expenses and whether or not one has the resources to maintain a desired quality of life are the approaches that Weller indicates are used in the practice of capturing expected income needed at retirement. Approaches for retirement income adequacy are also influenced by public policy, such as Medicare, Medicaid, and regulations for defined benefit and defined contribution plans.

Weller discusses the ways in which retirement savings are fragmented into separate mechanisms. The major avenues of retirement income include Social Security, defined benefit pension plans, defined contribution plans such as a 401(k), and housing. Social Security and pension plans yield lower risk to the plan holder than the individualized 401(k) savings plans. However, employers have shifted from pension plans toward individualized savings plans partly due to new funding rules that increase volatility. According to Weller, needed risk protections would include better managing the interests of financial institutions and the interests of the people, so that investment decisions are made for the people and not with the mindset of maximizing fees or commissions.

Weller suggests that risks affecting these savings include unemployment and financial market risk. In the financial market, stocks assume more risk than housing when considering

unexpected changes, but housing assumes more risk when considering liquidity. Therefore, Weller notes that diversifying by selecting investments whose rates of return are not correlated may protect investors from some financial risk. Individualized savings plans increase risks that households with pension plans are not exposed to, because the correlating links between the labor and financial markets tighten as individualized savings increase.

Weller describes in Chapter 2 the *risky asset concentration* indicator for diversification, which is a ratio of the share of stocks and housing out of the total household assets—higher levels of debt relative to savings lead to higher risk exposure, which increases wealth inequality. He delves into the issues underlying wealth inequality in Chapter 3, arguing that wealth is influenced by race and education and thus stressing the need for higher education among all races. He argues that households with greater labor market risk (risk of unemployment) have less wealth. Data presented in Chapter 4 show that inadequate retirement savings is greater among communities of color, single women, and the less educated.

In Chapter 5, Weller argues that the strains on Social Security are due to income inequality, as higher benefit amounts are received by lower wage earners. The author points out that according to the *2014 Social Security Trustees Report* (Board of Trustees of the Federal Old-Age and Survivors Insurance and Federal Disability Insurance Trust Funds, 2014), interest earnings on Social Security are projected to cover the expected shortfalls between tax revenue and benefit payouts through 2019, at which point Social Security will have to begin selling bonds to cover obligations. However, the volume of bonds for sell would be depleted by 2031.

While Social Security appears to be threatened, workers must find other avenues for retirement savings. But access to employer-sponsored retirement plans fluctuates, notes Weller, and participation in such plans is also hindered as a result of complex incentives brought on by policy that encourages savings through tax brackets that favor high-income earners. Weller points out that savings incentives work for a small portion of households (one-third) while leaving out a fifth of all households and increasingly failing all other households. This occurs as people increase exposure to financial market risk by investing in stocks and housing with borrowed money.

Weller discusses in the remaining chapters that, to improve the retirement situation, Congress should establish new minimums for Social Security such that someone with 30 years paid into the system would receive a benefit equal to at least 125% of the poverty line. He also recommends increasing these benefits for the elderly (85 years old and older) while improving survivorship benefits such that a spouse could receive 75% of the combined benefits for both spouses. New retirement savings options that are low-cost, low-risk and that encourage risk-minimizing payout options are also recommended to target low-income earners.

This is a very enlightening and detailed book that I recommend for anyone who is interested in current retirement issues. *Retirement on the Rocks* is a great read for the general public and for researchers seeking areas to further study.

In the Author's Own Words

"It will take a fundamental rethinking of our policy approach to help millions of Americans save more than they currently do for a sunny and comfortable future. I highlight the challenges to and the opportunities for building better life rafts—more and secure savings—for most people" (p. 12).

Reviewer's Details

Richard F. Works, M.B.A. (works.richard@bls.gov), is an economist for the Division of Compensation Data Estimation in the Office of Compensation and Working Conditions at the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics in Washington, D.C. He holds a Master of Business Administration (M.B.A.) from the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater and a Bachelor of Business Administration (B.B.A.) from Tennessee State University. His recent research has focused on trends in employer costs for providing defined benefit pension plans.

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