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Between Policy and Practice: Archival Descriptions, Digital Returns and a Place for Coalescing Narratives

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ABSTRACT

The Strathfieldsaye Estate collection at the University of Melbourne Archives is discussed in relation to recognising, protecting and reclaiming Koori (First Peoples of southeast Australia) heritage. The settler collection includes early 1900s photographs of Koori people within two distinct albums – a family album that includes a series of studio portraits of Koori adults and children, and an album depicting Koori families on Ramahyuck Aboriginal Mission Station. In the past, these albums have been defined by, and limited to, traditional archiving practices excluding Koori interpretation, authorship and social context. Restoring Koori ownership and authorship of intangible heritage plays a large part in consolidating ancestor photographs with Koori perspectives of identity and culture.

KEYWORDS

Koori histories; cultural heritage photographs; archival descriptions; applied ethics

Introduction

‘I sat in the archives and looked at [the picture of my mother] for hours,’¹ said Nepparnga Gumbula,² Yolnu elder and ceremonial leader, when he described one of the 400 images from the Webb and Warner collection at the University of Sydney Archives. Photographed in the late 1920s, Nepparnga’s mother is pictured walking toward the camera with a woven bag strung with ease over her shoulder. Nepparnga reflects on this historic photograph with cultural acknowledgement, love and respect. He also responds to the temporal relationship between past and present, saying, ‘When I return and sit down with the Elders, people will feel something. They will get that spirit back. I don’t want to see people losing this history.’³ For Nepparnga, speaking to the past refers to the legacy of his Djiliwirri ancestors that continues to be culturally exchanged between generations of kin through story, song, dance and ceremony.

This depiction of history representing the *living* leads to questions about the descriptions of cultural heritage collections such as those at the University of Melbourne Archives (UMA). The continued tensions between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander epistemologies and mainstream archiving practice compel us to consider ways in which to recognise and value descendant perspectives. The University of Melbourne’s Torres Strait Islander Cultural Heritage Policy (MPF1289) states that the

University manages 'cultural heritage in a way that recognises the relevant Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as primary guardians, keepers and knowledge holders [...]'.⁴ The purpose of the policy is to enable the inclusion of descendant authorship by generating the potential for a space whereby reciprocity and responsibility to cultural living histories can be negotiated.

Exploring one of the foundation collections of the UMA through the ways in which multiple and interrelated perspectives might be articulated, defined and conceptualised as part of archiving practices, is a respectful reorientation toward Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ethics, methods and approaches to heritage preservation and access.

About the authors

Sharon is an oral historian, media producer and researcher who has worked with Koori⁵ families from Victoria for the past two decades and in more recent years families from the Great Southern of Western Australia and the Northern Territory community of Wadeye (Port Keats). Central to these trusted family collaborations has been the process of reinterpreting and reinscribing heritage material returned in a digital form from libraries, archives, museums and record offices. Sharon engages oral history interviews, photographs and digital media in cultural partnerships to explore the meaningful return of lost ancestor memories to the everyday social dynamics of descendant family and kin.⁶

Stella is an archivist and collection manager with 15 years' experience working in the field of Aboriginal records. This has included researching and describing the extensive 'Board for Anthropological Research' films (1926–66) held in the South Australian Museum Archives (SAMA) and which were listed for Native Title claims to Aboriginal traditional lands and waters.⁷ The immediacy of motion picture film lends itself to questions of objective representation, such as the ways in which writers, anthropologists and archivists all bring authorship and curatorship to records and record descriptions. How this affects the record, our duty to persons in that record and their descendants, has been a continuing source of professional critical enquiry.

The decade-long crossover between the authors has been the basis for a practice-based engagement with Koori heritage collections. Archivists and heritage professionals focus on caring for the integrity of an item. However, this pragmatic view can lose sight of the deeply experiential and human quality of records, which is essential to consolidating archival and cultural perspectives. The underlying principles of collecting records and the purpose for which the UMA first took on the role of creating and storing collections therefore require context.

Collecting culture

When the UMA was established in 1960, its collecting purpose was not limited to preserving historic records of the University, but also to collect records for both teaching and research. The UMA's collecting strategy was significantly shaped by the Business Archives Council of Australia (BAC), a lobby group of industry and economic historians who advocated for the heritage and research value of business collections.

UMA's inaugural Archivist, Frank Strahan (1960–95), began surveying Victorian business records for the BAC in 1959. The first acquisitions were made well before the UMA was formally established.⁸

Within five years UMA had acquired significant and diverse holdings of business records. They included records of colonial administrators, lawyers, migrant settlers, merchants, pastoralists, property agents, building firms, insurance companies, retailers and multinational mining companies. In later years collection policies focused on obtaining the records of trade unions, welfare and cultural agencies, political and professional organisations as well as records created by individuals.⁹

Koori records and those records relating to other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have never been a purposeful focus of UMA collecting. This is evidenced in the *UMA Guide to Collections* (1983), which summarises the records it holds under broad categories such as migration, real-estate or primary industry. The only mention in this guide that UMA holds Koori records is a reference to the historic photographs in the Strathfieldsaye Estate collection.¹⁰ An archive such as the UMA, which is structured by creator entities, therefore requires that Koori people (as potential users of the archive) must navigate unintuitive systems to locate heritage materials. This kind of archival system supports and reinforces the primacy of colonial histories and, in the case of records relating to Koori people at UMA, affords no recourse, or right of reply. Koori records, therefore, languish under archival systems of description that have proven inadequate to incorporating Koori perspectives and knowledge.

From its inception the UMA situated itself as a research archive. Not only was it envisioned as a place to engage with the content of primary records, but also a place in which to deposit research generated by new academic inquiries. UMA's Frank Strahan worked closely with academics and students in workshops, focusing on the collections that pertained to Victorian districts such as Gippsland and towns such as Castlemaine and Beechworth. In the case of the Strathfieldsaye Estate collection, the research outputs included notes from field trips, photographs and history essays. The academic outputs have been incorporated with the primary records and demonstrate an archival intention of informing the archive with these descriptions and narratives.¹¹ What is consistent in UMA collection acquisitions is that records can often represent vast networks of relationships that exist between creators, archives and, in many cases, also users of the archive.

Strathfieldsaye Estate collection

The business and personal records belonging to the Strathfieldsaye Estate were donated to the UMA in 1976.¹² The donor was medical practitioner, army officer and farmer, Harold 'Clive' Disher (1891–1976). William Disher, Clive's great-grandfather, purchased Strathfieldsaye in 1869. He became a landowner of a 20,000-acre estate that bordered the northern shores of Lake Wellington in east Gippsland.¹³

William Disher, his wife Elizabeth, their four children, and subsequently their grandchildren, documented the operations of the estate. Their recordkeeping included diaries (1867–1927), financial accounts (1869–1975), manager correspondence (1904–47), weather records, almanacs and wage books. Situated alongside these pastoral records are the personal records of the family, including correspondence

(1848–1975), war diaries (1917, 1940–44), artefacts and ephemera of sporting achievement, certificates of service, watches, silverware, sewing needles and thread as well as envelopes with lockets of hair.¹⁴ The Disher family also kept an extensive number of photographs.

The Strathfieldsaye Estate photographs reveal a great deal about the Dishers, including their relationship to Reverend Friedrich Hagenauer (1829–1909), his wife, Louisa, and their children. The Disher and Hagenauer families were neighbours. They were connected not only by a property boundary, but also by marriage (Figure 1). ‘Clive’ Disher stands (front row) between his mother, Mary Disher (née Hagenauer), and his grandmother Mrs Christiana ‘Louisa’ Hagenauer (née Knobloch).

Louisa’s husband, the Reverend Hagenauer, was a Moravian missionary responsible for the Ramahyuck Aboriginal Mission Station situated near Lake Wellington and the Avon River.¹⁵ On a small piece of paper in the collection, Clive Disher notes that ‘... Reverend Hagenauer and my mother always said the natives had no word for “home” and “yuck” meant “our place” = our = our own (place)’. Reverend Hagenauer set up Ramahyuck in 1863, a place that was to be the home for many Koori families. However, though Ramahyuck may well have been ‘our own place’, this was conditional upon Hagenauer’s strict evangelical rule, clearly described in the *Argus* newspaper: ‘He [Hagenauer] treats the Aborigines as black-fellows and not as presumed equals of our race. His rule is paternal, firmness is exhibited here as well as kindness.’¹⁶ Further evidence of Reverend Hagenauer’s paternalism can be found in his correspondence to the Victorian Central Board for the Protection of Aborigines. The reports (1861–1925) are digitised and available online.¹⁷



Figure 1. The Hagenauer family with friends and other relatives, c.1895 (1976.0013.00062). Photographer Unknown. Strathfieldsaye Estate collection. University of Melbourne Archives.

The historic records detail the social connectedness between the Disher family, the Hagenauers and the Koori families on neighbouring Ramahyuck. The Dishers attended Sunday service at Ramahyuck Presbyterian Church, where Reverend Hagenauer preached. Emily Disher and her siblings attended the Ramahyuck School and Strathfieldsaye Estate employed Ramahyuck Kooris in seasonal shearing work. Social events also brought the neighbours and the wider community together.¹⁸

This is represented in both the 'Family Album' and the 'Ramahyuck Mission Station Album', which appear worn with years of repeated use. The Family Album is deep green, designed for holding carte-de-visite format photographs, so called because they are the size of a visiting card. These types of photographs became highly popular in the 1860s–70s for their ability to be shared as keepsakes or mementos. The Family Album (1976.0013 Unit 81; previous control PA/197) contains seven portraits of Koori people.

These photographs have been digitised and catalogued as items 1976.0013.00094–1976.0013.00100. The Ramahyuck Mission Station Album (1976.0013 Unit 82; previous control PA/198) contains 17 photographs which have been digitised and catalogued as items 1976.0013.00101–1976.0013.00117. All photographs and their descriptions are available at UMA's online image catalogue.¹⁹

In the Family Album, alongside portraits of relatives, friends, beloved pets, noted personalities and royalty, there are eight studio portraits of Kooris. Each of the eight portraits has been carefully hand-tinted with minute red flowers, delicate green foliage, and blue and yellow decorative features in the dresses of women and the neck ties of the men. All photographs, with one exception, are inscribed on the mount board with the names of the sitters and sometimes their relationships to the district they come from: 'Albert and Mary Ellen Darby from Port Albert' (Figure 2), 'George Gilbert's Family who were at Prospect Station' (Figure 3), 'Mary Ellen, Emily, Bridget, Alice, Emily Disher, Ida & Eiliza' (Figure 4). The seated portrait of Bridget Stephen carries an affectionate dedication on the verso to 'Miss Disher with Bridget Stephen's love' (Figure 5(a,b)).

Each carte-de-visite portrait, with the exception of one (Figure 5), has a printed verso advertising the professional photographer Frederick Cornell. They are studio portraits that were taken in 1875 by Cornell for the photographic montage 'Aboriginal Mission Station at Ramahyuck, Lake Wellington', which was submitted to the Victorian Inter-colonial Exhibition. The landscape photograph depicts the central layout of the mission grounds including the church and the family homes. The main photograph is then framed by 32 portraits of Koori people from Ramahyuck. It is important to consider why these photo-montages of Ramahyuck families were created and displayed at colonial expositions.²⁰

In 1869 the *Illustrated Australian News for Home Readers* described Ramahyuck mission environs as being both ideal for the quantity of game and fish but also as a place that was geographically situated so that Koori families were beyond the social interference of white settlers. However, this distance did not hinder general curiosity as reported by a journalist, 'Let the reader [...] visit the place and see with his own eyes.'²¹ The interests of professional photographers intersected with those of mission authorities in the production of these images, so that it is difficult to determine who commissioned whom. In many ways portrait photography allowed missionary authorities to exhibit their control over the lives of Kooris, or, as Giordano Nanni describes, the 'temporal control' of Koori life. As Nanni states of mission life:



Figure 2. Albert and Mary Ellen Derby from Port Albert, studio portrait (1976.0013.00097). Photographer Frederick Cornell. Photograph within the Family Album. Strathfieldsaye Estate collection, University of Melbourne Archives.

What all six stations had in common was their temporal confinement with rules and regulations framed in an unseen matrix of temporal control. Temporal curfews sought to establish the dominance of the new colonial timetables of agriculture, pastoralism and Christianity, while at the same time subsuming the pre-colonial calendars, rituals and economies of Aboriginal societies.²²

In some ways the montages therefore served the wide-ranging public appetite for pictorial evidence demonstrating how settler taxes were being spent, or for others with an altruistic interest and concern for Kooris, their wellbeing and survival.²³ An exhibit of mission success, with residents in their best clothes, the montage allows no further questions about the Kooris pictured such as, who are you, who are your people and where are you

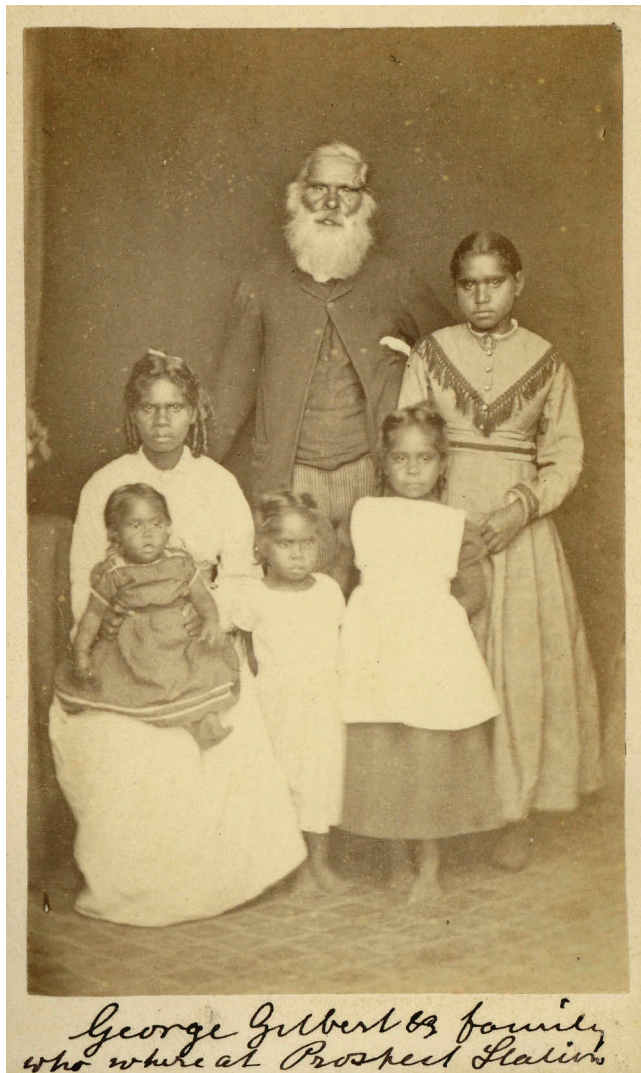


Figure 3. George Gilbert's Family who were at Prospect Station (1976.0013.00098). Photographer Frederick Cornell. Photograph within the Family Album. Strathfieldsaye Estate collection, University of Melbourne Archives.

from? In the 25 montage portraits there are no hand-tinted flowers or inscriptions. To consolidate archival and cultural perspectives, it is the points of difference between the public montage and the Disher's Family Album that need to be explored.

The Ramayhuck Mission Station Album (titled by Clive Disher) bears a dark burgundy cover.²⁴ The album holds 17 sepia-toned prints. They are photographs of Koori families and groups positioned outside in the surrounds of Ramayhuck. This includes families standing or sitting outside on the front porch of their homes. Several examples are photographs of the Stephens Family (Figure 6), and the Hood Family (Figure 7).



Figure 4. Mary Ellen, Emily, Bridget, Alice, Emily Disher, Ida and Eiliza, studio portrait (1976.0013.00099). Photographer Frederick Cornell. Photograph within the Family Album. Strathfieldsaye Estate collection, University of Melbourne Archives.

Describing and curating Koori photographs

To date, all Koori photographs in the Strathfieldsaye Estate collection have been digitised, catalogued and published online with the intention of making these Koori records available to descendant families or researchers working in collaboration with family groups. By taking this approach, the UMA has placed itself in a position to challenge some of its archival practices that have been endorsed over time by its role as custodian and describer of its collections. Traditional structures of describing records in the archive have often meant only a singular perspective has been recorded, or, as Thomas Osborne has argued, a process whereby ‘Knowledge of an archive is a sign of status, of authority, of a certain right to speak.’²⁵

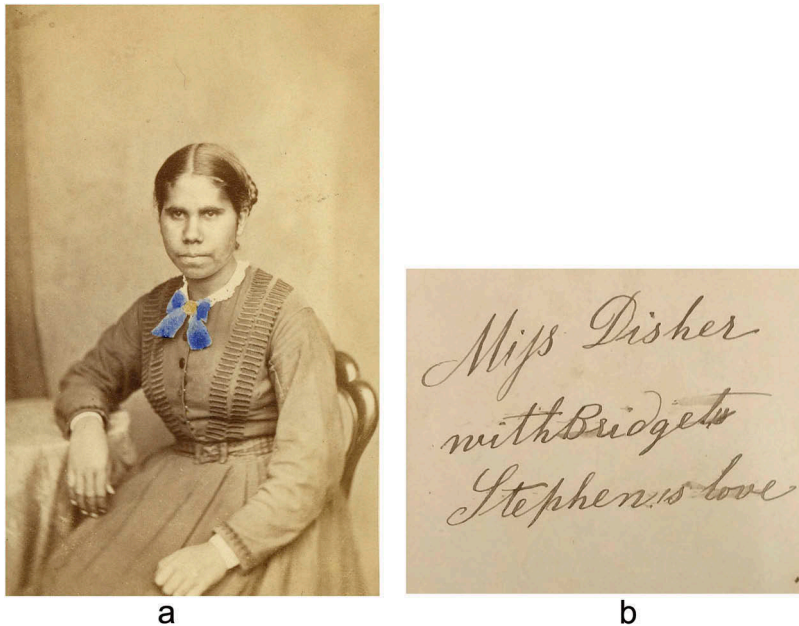


Figure 5. Bridget Stephen, studio portrait (1976.0013.00095). Inscribed in ink on verso 'Miss Disher with Bridget Stephen's love'. Photographer Frederick Cornell. Photograph within the Family Album. Strathfieldsaye Estate collection, University of Melbourne Archives.

The archival methodology used in describing these photographs overlays the images with existing published resources by historians, anthropologists and others including Norman Tindale's *Aboriginal Tribes of Australia: Their Terrain, Environmental Controls, Distribution, Limits, and Proper Names*, first published in 1974, and *The Kurnai of Gippsland* by Phillip Pepper and Tess De Araugo, published in 1985.²⁶ For example, Pepper and De Araugo's 'Index of Aboriginal People Mentioned in the Text' includes Makthar (real name), Tharabaan (nickname), White names (given and surname), Group or District. In the UMA descriptions of photographs discussed in this paper, only persons who are described as being from a language group in a published source, have been identified as such in the item description. Preferred names are used with alternative spellings retained. Further, Pepper and De Araugo in Appendix 3 of the same work cross-reference the recorded spellings of Kurnai groups as recorded by John Bulmer (overseer of Lake Tyers mission), Alfred William Howitt (Government Anthropologist) and Norman Tindale (Anthropologist). Considering persons accessing these photographs and their archival descriptions, and with the knowledge that Pepper and De Araugo's 1985 publication is no longer widely available, the description of the photographs at UMA discussed in this paper has been extended to include Norman Tindale's online resource 'Tindale Tribes'. This is a catalogue and map of Aboriginal language groups, first published as *Aboriginal Tribes of Australia: Their Terrain, Environmental Controls, Distribution, Limits, and Proper Names* (1974). Tindale was



Figure 6. Stephens Family (1976.0013.00116) [Back Left to Right] Fanny, Berty, Nellie, [Middle Left to Right] Maud, Emily, Alfie, [Front] Blanche. Photographer Unknown. Photograph within the Ramahyuck Album Strathfieldsaye Estate collection, University of Melbourne Archives.

attempting to identify Aboriginal language groups at the time of European contact, citing all published references including Howitt, Bulmer and many others.²⁷

The UMA descriptions also cross-reference catalogue references and information from Museum Victoria and the State Library of Victoria, Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies and the National Archives of Australia. These descriptions have been built or inferred from existing information. It is a foundation from which a respectful process of including multiple Koori narratives can be developed as part of taking back cultural heritage.



Figure 7. Hood Family with Annie Alberts (1976.0013.00111) Collin Hood (c.1836–1914) a Djabwurung man, stockman and renowned Aboriginal leader, his wife Helen Rivers (née Johnson) a Kurnai woman [seated far right] with two children. Annie Alberts (née Harrison) a Wotjabaluk woman seated on far left. Photographer Unknown. Photograph within the Ramahyuck Album. Strathfieldsaye Estate collection, University of Melbourne Archives.

Coalescing narratives

The reclamation of heritage from archives has helped to strengthen Koori claim and control of ancestor histories. In particular, when the return of significant material culture to descendants is socially reinstated within family. The Koori photographs from the Strathfieldsaye Estate collection have been integral to rebuilding a story of cultural identity for two family groups, *Wirlomin* – *Minang* (Noongar) families from

the Great Southern of Western Australia and *Gunai – Kurnai* families from Gippsland in eastern Victoria. The respective families share an ancestor, Bessy Flowers (c.1849–95), who was lost to family memory for many generations.

The consolidation of the Strathfieldsaye Estate photographs with *Wirlomin – Minang* and *Gunai – Kurnai* oral histories is powerfully represented in a short film, ‘No Longer a Wandering Spirit’ (2016).²⁸ In the film, photographs are used to retrace the historical movement of Bessy from ‘Annesfield’ (a native institution in Albany, Western Australia) to Ramahyuck and to also represent a resilient story of contemporary identity. The film’s *Wirlomin – Minang* narrator, Ezzard Flowers, shares through a personal story how photographs can mend histories broken by colonisation and restore cultural relationships.

The cultural perception that nineteenth-century photographs embody the spirit and memory of past relatives acknowledges the power of photographs to socially elicit relatedness. On such terms kinship is the agent that combines history, memory and the relational. The responsibility to maintain and keep alive ancestor and kin memories as part of Koori histories is culturally expressed by Maxine Briggs, who identifies as *Tuangwurrung* and *Yorta Yorta*:

These revered ancestors who were captured in the collections of 19th century photographs are blood relatives, they are not distant relatives because they lived a hundred years or so ago, they live on in the photos and we are responsible for them just as we are for our living kin.²⁹

In relation to Koori networks of family *Gunditjmara* Elder, Jim Berg, also advocates for photographs to communicate the survival of Koori people. Referring to 825 Koori portraits exhibited in ‘Have Camera Will Travel’, he argues that photographs help the process of connecting back to country and to people. In this cultural way, photographs have the potential to function as a family tree and bridge gaps in time. Linking generations of family is particularly important for Kooris who have experienced dislocation from culture and kin, as Jim argues:

The policy in the old days said: ‘You will lose your identity, you will lose your culture and spirituality and everything else’. So, we had in the old days no choice, otherwise we were penalised. In the broader community, people had a choice of losing their language, their culture and identity, if they want to. We had no choice. To bring back the dignity and spirituality we have to find ourselves within ourselves, and we’ve got to go back and bring culture forward and that’s important, and then we know who we are. And broader community, they sometimes don’t quite understand, because they’ve never been in a situation where they was told: ‘Hey you don’t exist’. But, we do exist, and we need to reclaim, or recapture, or just bring the past to the present, and that is about knowing who we are.³⁰

Remembering ancestors and connecting back to country is a self-conception and self-perception that culturally unifies Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Identity is therefore integral to understanding the complex and political nature of Koori engagement with historical photographs. This is particularly the case when photographs of Kooris were staged by colonial photographers as a way of representing their ‘fading’ presence within colonial society. For Maxine Briggs, ‘These images [of ancestors] represent the members of their bloodline at point of impact, at the point where the future lives of their descendants was changed forever.’³¹

To shift colonialism's fixture on history, Linda Tuhiwai Smith argues that to remember ancestors and relatives is about remembering 'a painful past' and 'people's responses to that pain'. Elaborating on the generational affects of cultural displacement, loss of ancestor memories and broader social and political neglect, she states:

While collectively indigenous communities can talk through the history of painful events, there are frequent silences and intervals in the stories about what happened after the event. Often there is no collective remembering, as communities were systematically ripped apart, children were removed for adoption, extended families separated across different reserves and national boundaries. The aftermath of such pain was borne by individuals or smaller family units, sometimes unconsciously or consciously obliterated through alcohol, violence and self-destruction. Communities often turned inward and let their suffering give way to a desire to be dead. Violence and family abuse became entrenched in communities, which had no hope. White society did not see and did not care.³²

In order to heal from past injustices, Tuhiwai Smith advocates that '[B]oth healing and transformation become crucial strategies in any approach which asks a community to remember what they may have decided unconsciously or consciously to forget.'³³ Such a project of recuperation is an ethical renewal of human care and decolonisation, as Deborah Bird Rose has emphatically defined. Rose argues, 'The past is contested territory, and so memory, ethics, and narratives are also contested.'³⁴ The ethics of this claim – to be morally involved with the past, in the present – for settler descendants and their families, therefore engages a moral relatedness to the past through recognising colonial violence and injustice and from this place a willingness to work toward dialogical alternatives.

Photographs of Koori ancestors therefore represent more than colonial injury. They stand for heritage material essential to cultural activism and reassertion of cultural meaning and ownership. If photographs act as a gateway to ancestors, then it follows that kinship is the anchor point for revived memories of kin.

At the State Library of Victoria in 2016, 'No Longer a Wandering Spirit' was premiered to a full house of 200 people. The film united Bessy's *Wirlomin – Minang* and *Gunai – Kurnai* families for the third time since their first meeting in 2013. The *Djirri Djirri* dances welcomed all to the traditional *Wurundjeri* lands and the audience were asked to participate in a different kind of conversation. By both listening and watching they became part of a dialogue central to the language of Koori family. The social engagement of family with photographs from archives and contemporary images represented through film had the affect of providing insight to cultural resilience. Understood in more depth were the reasons for the cultural imperative for Koori people to reposition ancestors within the story of family. The politics of ownership, such as who has the right to be the author of ancestral histories, was also paramount to the experience of understanding cultural futures. Engagement with the past is not only about the restoration of an ancestral story from the historical record. It is also about Koori families (and families belonging to other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities) reclaiming authorship of cultural histories that profoundly matter to descendant families and their communities.

Recognising cultural rights to heritage encourages archives to reconsider the scope of provenance, and to expand upon the role and meaning of archives as one of co-authoring and shared custodianship of cultural heritage. To continue bridging gaps between policy

and practice, archives need to innovate and apply methodologies that include Koori histories and contemporary perspectives of culture and identity.

Conclusion

The digital return of the Strathfieldsaye Estate photographs to Koori descendant families is a first step within a larger conversation about the care of Koori heritage collections at UMA. The current management framework in heritage collections needs to be part of a shared dialogue with Koori people towards enacting obligations recognising 'Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as the primary guardians, keepers and knowledge holders of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural heritage',³⁵ which is critical to building 'genuine and effective partnerships'. The applied practice of creating and maintaining relationships between heritage, the archive and cultural custodians is an exchange of knowledge with a place that already exists in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture. An example of this is Ngapartji Ngapartji, which translates culturally in Anangu terms as *I give you something, you give me something*.³⁶ For UMA, Ngapartji Ngapartji, is therefore a possible point of entry into a shared conversation aimed at reconfiguring the terms of exchange between the archive, custodians and descendent families. The willingness of archives and heritage institutions to analyse and understand their obligations beyond a transaction of digital return to one of openness and reciprocity, is a gift without condition.³⁷

Further information

The Strathfieldsaye photographs have been published with the intention of making Koori culture in the collections held at UMA known and available to Elders and descendant families. In its role of collecting and caring for items of cultural heritage, UMA recognises that it has a duty of care to the persons in the photographs and their descendants. The descriptions of these photographs have been based on published sources, which can sometimes have contradictory information concerning dates, names and places. UMA has attempted to represent these differences, where they occur, rather than determining what information is correct. We greatly appreciate and welcome all feedback and comments about improving the current descriptions. Digital copies of the photographs can be requested for no fee, except if you are asking for a higher-resolution copy than we currently have available. Original photographs may be viewed upon request. Please email enquiries to archives@archives@unimelb.edu.au

Notes

1. Joseph Nepparnga Gumbula quoted by Joel Gibson in 'Reclaiming the Past Can Be Personal', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 9 April 2017, available at <<https://www.smh.com.au/national/reclaiming-the-past-can-be-personal-20070409-gdpvai.html>>, accessed 25 September 2018.
2. *ibid.*
3. Information Technologies Indigenous Communities (ITIC) was a two-day symposium on 27–28 September 2017, at the University of Melbourne. It was held with the support of and

in conjunction with the Australian Society of Archivists National Conference. The ITIC Symposium was held in memory of the late Dr Joseph Nepparnga Gumbula from north-east Arnhem Land, who was a major contributor to establishing the National Recording Project and to enhancing knowledge of Indigenous archives and collections in Australia and internationally. Dr Gumbula was a researcher, Yolngu leader and ARC Indigenous Fellowship recipient who passed away in 2015. He worked extensively with Australian archives, museums and universities including the University of Melbourne, University of Sydney Archives, the Macleay Museum, Museum Victoria and the Australian National University amongst many others.

4. The University of Melbourne Torres Strait Islander Cultural Heritage Policy (MPF1289), 2017, available at <<http://policy.unimelb.edu.au/MPF1289>>, accessed 25 September 2018.
5. Koori is a term used by Aboriginal people of Victoria and the southern region of New South Wales. The term is these Indigenous people's own word for themselves. Koori is derived from the Awabakal language from the northeastern coast of New South Wales and means 'man'. Robert MW Dickson et al. *Australian Aboriginal Words*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1990, pp. 169–221. Alternative spellings for Koorie are Koorie, Kuri and Coorie. See: William Stanley Ramson (ed.), *The Australian National Dictionary*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1988, p. 354.
6. Sharon Huebner and Kooramee Cooper, 'Koorie Culture and Technology: A Digital Archive Project for Victorian Koorie Communities', *Archives and Manuscripts*, vol. 35, no. 1, May 2007, pp. 18–32; Sharon Huebner, '*Nidjuuk. Niih. Kaatitjin* – Look, Listen, Learn: Noongar and Kooris Interpreting the Silences of a Colonial Archive', PhD thesis, Monash University, Melbourne, 2016; Sharon Huebner, 'A Digital Community Project for the Recuperation, Activation and Emergence of Victorian Koorie Knowledge, Culture and Identity', in L Ormond-Parker, A Corn, C Fforde, K Obata and S O'Sullivan (eds.), *Information Technology and Indigenous Communities*, Australian Institute for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies Research Publications, Canberra 2013, pp. 171–84; Sharon Huebner and Ezzard Flowers, "It's a Resting Place, Where Our Spirits Go": Bringing Back Lost Ancestor Memories to Western Australia's Great Southern – Noongar *Boodja*', *Journal of Arts & Communities*, vol. 8, nos. 1–2, 2016, pp. 75–92.
7. The High Court of Australia's decision '*Mabo v The State of Queensland*' No 2, 1992 was a turning point in recognising the unique connection and rights of Indigenous peoples to their lands and waters. Legislation that followed such as *The Native Title Act*, 1993, compelled governments to disclose the details of the heritage collections that they managed. The dedicated project to describe the collections within SAMA was funded by the Attorney-General's Department of South Australia. Listing projects sought to disclose details of these collections, so that they could be discoverable to Native Title applicants, for research and to use these records that evidenced connection to lands. The Board for Anthropological Research (BAR) collection was created during 40 field expeditions over the course of 50 years. An alpha-numerical system of identifiers enables researchers and families to identify people across a wide range of media (including film, photographs, sound recordings, genealogies, maps, vocabularies, drawings) as it relates to anthropological, sociological and linguistic information. Available at <<http://www.samuseum.sa.gov.au/collections/information-resources/archives/board-for-anthropological-research-aa-346>>, accessed 25 September 2018. The records pertain to an estimated 5500 Aboriginal people and their kinship groups. This collection is deeply imbricated with the vast records of anthropologist Norman Tindale, who was a central participant on the BAR expeditions and whose genealogies include an estimated 50,000 Aboriginal people. South Australian Museum Archives, available at <<http://www.samuseum.sa.gov.au/collections/information-resources/archives/tindale-dr-norman-barnett-aa-338>>, accessed 25 September 2018; 'Tindale Tribes' A Catalogue and Map of Aboriginal Language Groups, 2000, available at <<http://archives.samuseum.sa.gov.au/tribalmmap>>, accessed 25 September 2018 and <<http://archives.samuseum.sa.gov.au/tindaletribes/index.html>>, accessed 25 September 2018. Published first in hard copy as Norman B Tindale, *Aboriginal Tribes of Australia*:

- Their Terrain, Environmental Controls, Distribution, Limits, and Proper Names*, University of California Press and Australian National University Press, Berkeley and Canberra, 1974.
8. Cecily Close in Melinda Barrie et al., *Primary Sources: 50 Stories from 50 Years of the Archives*, University of Melbourne Archives, Melbourne, 2010, p. 8 and Frank Strahan in University of Melbourne Archives, *University of Melbourne Archives Guide to Collections*, University of Melbourne, Parkville, 1983, p. vii.
 9. Close, p. 10.
 10. University of Melbourne Archives 1983, p. 82.
 11. See essays in Strathfieldsaye Estate (1976.0013) Units 74–76. How much and to what extent collecting institutions can meaningfully address the inequity and limitations of their own descriptive systems, to be genuinely inclusive of Koori knowledge, memory and experience, leads Wiradjuri man Nathan Sentance to enquire if institutions can truly challenge the structures which continue to benefit them. Perhaps, he suggests, ‘[...] White fragility, is more of a concern to some people than the truth.’ See ‘Engaging with the Uncomfortable’, *Archival Decolonist*, 8 April 2018, available at <<https://archivaldecolonist.com/2018/04/08/engaging-with-the-uncomfortable/>>, accessed 25 September 2018.
 12. In 1976 the University of Melbourne received the ‘Strathfieldsaye Estate Bequest’ comprising land, buildings, domestic and business contents therein: equipment, stock, cash and securities for the establishing of The Strathfieldsaye Institute of Teaching and Research in Agriculture and Allied Sciences. Seventeen metres of historic records were transferred to the UMA.
 13. Bryan Egan, ‘Disher, Harold Clive (1891–1976)’, *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Australian National University, available at <<http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/disher-harold-clive-10020>>, published first in hardcopy 1996, accessed 25 September 2018.
 14. Strathfieldsaye Estate collection (1976.0013) described and listed online via the UMA Catalogue, available at <<https://archives.unimelb.edu.au/>>, accessed 25 September 2018.
 15. Phillip Pepper and Tess De Araugo, *What Did Happen to the Aborigines of Victoria? The Kurnai of Gippsland*, Hyland House, Melbourne, 1985, p. 131.
 16. *Argus*, Melbourne, 2 January 1866.
 17. Reports of the Board for the Protection of Aborigines in Victoria, 1861–1925. Digitised and online available at <<https://digitised-collections.unimelb.edu.au/handle/11343/21345>>, accessed 25 September 2018.
 18. Meredith Fletcher, *Strathfieldsaye: A History and a Guide*, Centre for Gippsland Studies, Churchill, 1952, p. 19.
 19. Since this collaboration began, the existence of the Strathfieldsaye photographs have moved descriptively from one reference in the finding aid of a pastoralist family ‘Ramahyuck Mission Station Album’ to the present 42 unique catalogue entries, naming people, relationships and place; each searchable in their own right. The Family Album contains seven Koori portraits, identified by the following item reference numbers: 1976.0013.00094–1976.0013.00100. The Ramahyuck Mission Station Album contains 17 photographs, which are identified by the following item reference numbers: 1976.0013.00101–1976.0013.00117. A further 17 loose photographs have been catalogued as: 1976.0013.00081; 1976.0013.00085–1976.0013.00086; 1976.0013.00088–1976.0013.00092; 1976.0013.00118–1976.0013.00126. Search keywords (e.g. Ramahyuck) or item reference (e.g. 1976.0013.00116) in the ‘Search digitised items’ field available at <<https://archives.unimelb.edu.au/>>, accessed 25 September 2018. Since 2008, UMA has been actively auditing its holdings, identifying and describing Indigenous Australian records. This complex undertaking is ongoing. Those seeking records of a particular region or place are encouraged to contact UMA reference services.
 20. See ‘Aboriginal Mission Station, Ramahyuck’, photographic montage c.1875 by Frederick Cornell (1833–90), State Library of Victoria, Lady Loch album, Sale and environs (H87.16/11), available at <<http://handle.slv.vic.gov.au/10381/290242>>, accessed 25 September 2018. Refer to Jane Lydon’s ‘“Watched Over by the Indefatigable Moravian Missionaries”: Colonialism and Photography at Ebenezer and Ramahyuck’, *The La Trobe Journal*, vol. 76, Spring 2005, pp. 27–48. In the Disher family album not only are these photographs hand-tinted, they are also annotated with names, relationships and place of origin. These

inscriptions (not yet forensically confirmed) were possibly written by Bridget Stephens, whose dedication to Miss Disher (Figure 5(b)) bears great similarity to those on the carte-de-visite portraits (Figures 2, 3, 4). This precedent of acknowledging name, relationship and place cannot be underestimated.

21. Ebenezer and David Syme, 'Ramahyuck, Aboriginal Mission Station, Lake Wellington, Gippsland', *Illustrated Australian News for Home Readers*, Melbourne, 4 January 1869, p. 5, available at <<https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/60450329>>, accessed 25 September 2018.
22. Giordano Nanni, 'Time, Empire and Resistance in Settler-Colonial Victoria', *Time Society*, vol. 20, no. 1, 2011, pp. 11–12.
23. Refer to Ian Clark, *A Peep at the Blacks: A History of Tourism at Coranderrk Aboriginal Station, 1863–1924*, De Gruyter, Berlin, 2016.
24. The album is signed by Harold Clive Disher and annotated on the fly cover 'Ramayhuck Mission Station, around 1900'. Phillip Pepper identifies the photographs as between 1898–1901. Pepper and De Araugo, pp. 219, 223, 233.
25. Thomas Osborne cited by Joan M. Schwartz, "'Having New Eyes:" Spaces of Archives, Landscapes of Power', *Archivaria*, vol. 61, Spring 2006, p. 25. Henrietta Fourmile contends that 'in the context of Aboriginal sovereignty it is completely untenable that one "nation" (i.e. European Australia) should have monopoly and control of such a substantial body of information concerning another, the Aboriginal "nation"', in 'Who Owns the Past – Aborigines as Captives of the Archives', *Aboriginal History* 1989, vol. 13, no. 1, p. 4.
26. See Pepper and De Araugo; Tindale, 1974/2000.
27. Pepper and De Araugo, pp. 288, 310–19; Richard Broome, *Aboriginal Victorians: A History Since 1800*, Allen & Unwin, Crows Nest, 2005, pp. 138, 142, 155, 186; Museums Victoria Collections Catalogue, available at <<https://collections.museumvictoria.com.au/>>, accessed 25 September 2018; State Library of Victoria Catalogue, available at <<https://www.slv.vic.gov.au/search-discover>>, accessed 25 September 2018; National Archives of Australia, 'Discovering Anzacs', available at <<https://discoveringanzacs.naa.gov.au>>, accessed 25 September 2018.
28. Sharon Huebner et. al., 'No Longer a Wandering Spirit: The Story of Bessy Flowers', 2016, screened at the State Library of Victoria, 1 December 2016, part 1, available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A6UWQ3P_M2Y>, accessed 25 September 2018, and part 2, available at <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dEVd-BZ2n5s>>, accessed 25 September 2018. Also see Andrew Trounson, 'Aboriginal Voices in the Afterlife of Photographs', *Pursuit*, University of Melbourne, 30 November 2016, available at <<https://pursuit.unimelb.edu.au/articles/aboriginal-voices-in-the-afterlife-of-photographs>>, accessed 25 September 2018.
29. Briggs in Maxine Briggs, Jane Lydon and Madeline Say, 'Collaborating: Photographs of Kooris in the State Library of Victoria', *The La Trobe Journal*, no. 85, May 2010, p. 121.
30. Jim Berg quoted by Sharon Huebner, 'Nidjuuk, Niih, Kaatitjin', p. 36.
31. Briggs, p. 120.
32. Linda Tuhiwai Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*, University of Otago Press, Dunedin, 1999, p. 146.
33. *ibid.*
34. Deborah Bird Rose, *Reports from a Wild Country: Ethics for Decolonisation*, University of New South Wales Press, Sydney, 2004, pp. 11, 31–2.
35. University of Melbourne, 2017.
36. Palmer cautions against an interpretation that is merely limited to a Western notion of market exchange. Suggesting that 'gift' and its attendant obligations might be closer. Dave Palmer, *Ngapartji Ngapartji: The Consequences of Kindness*, Big hART, Alice Springs, 2010, p. 4.
37. The Melbourne Social Equity Institute facilitated a Community of Practice, July 2017–April 2018, investigating multi-disciplinary reflections on community-engaged research, culminating in a symposium held during the Place and Partnerships Conference, 5–6 April 2018, available at <<https://socialequity.unimelb.edu.au/community-of-practice>>, accessed 25 September 2018. Director/producer Shannon Owen, 12 February 2018, spoke of the imperative for individual practitioners to articulate and

interrogate where they stand in their practice. Owen contended that ethics are too often assumed to be instinctual or are self-evident, and, in the case of institutions, often assumed to be authoritative. If archivists seek to explicitly articulate the ethics and methodologies of their practice, not only will this bring transparency, but it will also engender trust.

Acknowledgements

The authors would like to acknowledge the Hugh Williamson Foundation and the Melbourne Engagement Grant funding scheme at the University of Melbourne for supporting the research that has informed the writing of this article. We also thank Melbourne *Pursuit* journalist, Andrew Trounson, for the 30 November 2016 article that reported on the Strathfieldsaye Estate Koori photographs. Sincere thanks to the organisers of the 2017 Information Technologies Indigenous Communities (ITIC) symposium, Dr Lyndon Ormond-Parker, Discovery Indigenous Scheme Research Fellow, The University of Melbourne and Julia Mant, President of the Australian Society of Archivists. Special thanks also to Kim Burrell and Michaela Hart for their considered reading and contribution to the drafts.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

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