

2

Spirit of place: The critical case for site visits in the construction of Indigenous Australian histories

Barry Judd and Katherine Ellinghaus

They come out to the community in a big four-wheel drive – towin’ flash campin’ gear – looked like they’d be stayin’ awhile – set up camp. The historians – they said they were – come out to help us tell our story. (Leane, 2017)

The photographs in this essay depict work done during a research project that examines the education scheme facilitated by Friedrich Wilhelm (FW) Albrecht, the superintendent at Ntaria (Hermannsburg Mission) in the Northern Territory in the 1950s and 1960s. Albrecht created a program in which young girls were taken with permission from their families, fostered and educated, but were allowed to return to family and community for holidays. Never before studied, the history of this scheme promises to provide us with a deeper understanding of the varied ways in which postwar ‘assimilation’ was imagined and enacted by both officials and Aboriginal people. But this project is not just about uncovering the past. It is also about finding new ways of writing history that move beyond the problems created when a discipline that is overwhelmingly staffed by non-Indigenous people disseminates knowledge about communities, individuals and places that they are not connected to, and have never visited, spoken to or stepped foot upon.

As discussed in numerous other chapters in this volume, the call for histories to be created not just from archives but also in collaboration with Aboriginal historians and using multiple sources is not new. Historians of settler colonialism are increasingly beginning to work collaboratively and in ways that are Indigenous-led (Birch, 2006, 2013; Ellinghaus & Judd, 2020; Grieves, 2005; Judd & Ellinghaus, 2020; Peters-Little, 2010). The spatial implications of this shift are explored here. One of the authors of this chapter, Ellinghaus, is one such scholar who has moved beyond solely archivally based studies to consciously engage with the Aboriginal people that she researches. She is of Irish, German and Scottish descent. The other author, Judd, works in the field of Indigenous studies, a discipline whose fundamental aim – to promote the wellbeing of living, breathing Aboriginal people through scholarly activism – sits at odds with the emphasis on archives that defines the discipline of history. While fieldwork, travel and relationality are expected in other disciplines such as anthropology and sociology, in the field of history there has been little discussion of such collaborations beyond acknowledging the need for them. What happens when historians step away from big city-based archives to search out, engage and speak with Aboriginal people who might live close by or far away in remote communities? What is gained (or maybe lost) when academic research is combined with the building of personal relationships required for authentic collaboration? How are relationships articulated through the outcomes of an academic project? What happens when the distance – cultural, experiential, sometimes geographical – between researcher and researched is traversed?

Unlike fieldwork-based disciplines, history does not yet have a language to articulate these moments, or to answer these questions. As Dalley and Barnwell argue in the introduction to this volume, multidisciplinary scholarship allows us to focus on the present as well as the past and shows the importance of a step beyond basic historical truth-telling: the building of relationships that do not reinscribe colonial power relations. In this chapter, we use the medium of photography to explore these issues. Photographs show us a glimpse of a moment in time, they show us relationality in the way bodies relate to each other and they give shape to the disembodied scholarly voice or the ‘universalising Western standpoint’ (Nakata et al., 2012). They situate research in particular places, give it a more colourful background of dirt and trees (or cars or buildings) rather than the black and white of the page. They commemorate our research, providing small reminders of the many small moments that are required when trusting relationships are

formed between researcher and researched. The relationships depicted here began in small, everyday ways. In 2016, Ellinghaus reached out to Lorna Wilson, Judd's mother, whose life was shaped by FW Albrecht's scheme of taking Aboriginal girls out of Central Australia to be educated. At the time, Ellinghaus knew nothing of the scheme – she contacted Wilson to ask about her childhood in Mparntwe (Alice Springs) for another, short-lived research project. They stayed in touch, and have ever since, by phone and through regular visits. Our research into Albrecht's scheme is driven by Lorna Wilson's desire to tell this story; these photographs depict her as teacher rather than informant.

Historians most often use photographs in their work as evidence of the past, not the present. They imagine photographs as a way of bridging the distance between non-Indigenous Australians and Indigenous people, specifically as a medium through which settler Australians have confronted the violence of the past. Photo narrative and analysis has increasingly been applied in history as a technique to understand past relations between Aboriginal and settler Australians. Jane Lydon's *Eye Contact* (2006) and *Photography, Humanitarianism, Empire* (2016) are exemplars of current work that seeks to give insight to imperial and settler-colonial use of photography to represent Indigenous peoples for various political ends. Importantly, such work also seeks an understanding of how Aboriginal peoples have used photography since the 1930s to support their own anticolonial and imperial agendas. While historians have been interested in subjecting photographic records of Aboriginal people to various types of images and narrative analysis, the recently published monograph *Bitter Fruit: Australian Photographs to 1963* by New Zealand-based authors Michael Graham-Stewart and Francis McWhannell allows this collection of photographic images to speak for themselves. According to the authors:

The images included here are inevitably skewed in viewpoint, most having been taken by non-Aboriginal men. But they show actual people in actual situations. This publication does not aim to fix interpretations. (Graham-Stewart & McWhannell, 2017, p. 9)

Bitter Fruit is, however, very much an outlier. The dominant utilisation of photographs in history involves analysis of the images that capture Aboriginal life in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries according to various methodological approaches drawn from structuralism, poststructuralism, anticolonialism, postcolonialism or settler colonialism. For example, historian Jane Lydon begins her 2012 book *Flash of Recognition: Photography*

and the Emergence of Indigenous Rights by asking how photographs have ‘aroused empathy with Indigenous suffering and discrimination, and moved viewers to action on their behalf?’ She writes about how:

photography has come to hold a privileged place as proof of distant events – such as the death of a foreign terrorist, or the plight of victims of natural disaster. The power of the image, both to create empathy and to prove what is, has made it an essential tool in the hands of humanitarians and human rights activists attempting to intervene in distant wars or tragedies. (Lydon, 2012, p. 14)

Photography has functioned as a way for settler Australians to ‘know’ Aboriginal people, whom they may only rarely meet in their everyday life:

For most non-Indigenous Australians, ideas about Aboriginal people have always been formed through images and narratives, rather than relationships with real people. This is a function of distance – both geographic and social – as well as the minority status of Indigenous people, who make up a little over 2 per cent of the population. (Lydon, 2012, p. 16)

By contrast, in the photographs used in this essay, Ellinghaus is the one traversing the distance – from Melbourne to Titjikala and Mparntwe, and from archive to living, breathing person. The photographs here are not doing the work of bridging distance. Rather they *depict* distances being closed or closing – an historian coming to better understand the past through ‘being here’ (Judd, 2018). The photographs in this essay also flip, or maybe speak back to, the common view of the medium of colonial photography as ‘trophies bagged by the colonial hunter, ciphers in a relationship characterized by distance, exploitation, and coercion’ (Lydon, 2006, p. 2) or used as an ‘agent of “social truth” depicting poverty and suffering for middle class consumption’ (Birch, 2006; McGrath & Brooks, 2010). We are not, of course, the first to rethink the messages that photographs might convey in colonial contexts (Aird, 2015; Andrew & Neath, 2018; Hughes & Trevorrow, 2018).

Readers should note that Judd, the Aboriginal researcher, is depicted in just one of these shots. Mostly he is found behind the camera inverting the usual colonial-imperial gaze whereby the imperialist-colonialist camera determines the frame of Aboriginality. Elsewhere Judd is completely absent. Arielay Azoulay’s concept of a photographic ‘civil contract’ is useful here to understand the significance of this shift. Azoulay points us towards the contract that exists in every photograph between the photographer,

the photographed persons and the spectator, and the way in which every photograph ‘bears the traces of the meeting between the photographed persons and the photographer, neither of whom can, on their own, determine how this meeting will be inscribed in the resulting image’ (Azoulay, 2008, p. 11). Azoulay sees this contract as a free space that can exist separately from the usual political, economic or social structures that shape our lives. ‘The relations between the three parties involved in the photographic act – the photographed persons, the photographer, and the spectator’, she writes, ‘are not mediated through a sovereign power and are not limited to the bounds of a nation-state or an economic contract’ (Azoulay, 2008, p. 24). The photographs discussed here are of small moments between individuals; they do not depict historically significant locations, as do images in many other chapters in this collection, or well-known people. Readers should pay attention to the connections between the subjects, not between the subjects and themselves. The photographs presented here are, therefore, far removed from the types of photographic material that most historians would consider significant, important and worthy of academic engagement.

The photographs we present are different from well known and important photographic collections such as those produced at Coranderrk, Victoria, in the nineteenth century by Frederick Kruger, or those captured in Arnhem Land, Northern Territory, in the twentieth century by Donald Thomson, among other important photographic collections. Yet, these are images that contain value because they reflect the importance of relationality and its role in shaping research agendas and outputs. In the field of Indigenous studies, collaborative research with Indigenous people is seen as a vital part of research, drawing from Indigenous notions of relationality that ‘make visible Indigenous peoples’ connectedness with the earth and with each other’ (Moreton-Robinson, 2016, p. 75). Pointing to the constant work that is required to move towards research based in relationality, these images underscore the need for researchers to be mobile in overcoming the geographic distances that often separate them from the people and communities that are the focus of their research. The images also demonstrate the need for researchers to set aside the concept of objective truth, and the research practice that seeks to (re)impose spatial distances between the researcher and those who are the subject of intellectual enquiry. A strength (and perhaps a weakness) of what these photographic images demonstrate is the ‘closing of the gap’ that occurs when researchers commit

to relationality with the Aboriginal subjects of their research as boundaries between the personal and professional, work and life become somewhat blurred, dynamic and unstable.

The purpose of this chapter is twofold. First, by pointing to several key photographs taken during the unfolding of our research collaboration, we demonstrate the potential importance of relationality, in which the research is focused on Aboriginal peoples' histories and contemporary race relations in settler Australia. Second, the photographic fragments of our work presented here demonstrate that ethical research collaborations between Aboriginal and settler-Australian researchers and Aboriginal knowledge holders who exist outside academia, in their communities, are possible. This is important, as it provides an example of how historians might move beyond what Eve Tuck and K Wayne Yang (2012) have called the 'move to settler innocence' – by which they mean the imperative that settlers move past their own white guilt about Indigenous dispossession (and the performance of this as self-indulgence) – and engage with the issue through substantive de-colonial action. In the Australian context, this means settler action that is based in relationality of the type central to the methodological framing of works by John Bradley (2014) and Amanda Kearney (2019), and evidenced in the collaborative and exemplary research collaborations and partnerships of Aaron Corn, Joe Gumbala and Steven Wanta Patrick (Corn, 2018; Corn & Patrick, 2018).

Being There (Ellinghaus)

On my first visit in 2018 to Mparntwe to work on the Albrecht project, I met Lorna in the foyer of the hotel I was staying at. I assumed we would drive to her house and begin the interview straight away. I had a voice recorder and ethics forms in my bag and was looking forward to getting the interview done, then perhaps having a swim and some time alone (I had small children at the time). However, instead of going to her house to do the interview, Lorna took me first to the Alice Springs Old Lutheran Church Living History Collection, a museum managed by historian Olga Radke, the widow of a Lutheran pastor. It is situated in the 'old' church on the Lutheran Church Mission block – the original church was built in December 1938, the same year in which the block was established (Figure 2.1). It was the church in which FW Albrecht himself taught, preached, married and confirmed his congregation.



Figure 2.1. The importance of place. Lorna and Kat at the Alice Springs Old Lutheran Church Living History Collection, 7 May 2021.

Photograph: L Jewell.

The ‘new’ church was built in the late 1960s. The ‘Mission block’ on which it sits was a place where people lived, and where Lorna herself spent much time as a child. It housed two cottages in which up to 12 children from surrounding cattle stations lived so they could attend school, supervised by ‘cottage parents’. Lorna herself never lived there, as she had kin who lived nearby with whom she could stay when she moved to Mparntwe to go to primary school. But it was the place where she spent a lot of time, and the place where an important Sunday school exchange took place – a moment in which Albrecht noticed Lorna’s intelligence and clocked her as a potential participant in the scheme. On that first day I was going with the flow, but later I realised that this pre-interview visit was a strategic and important step made by Lorna.

Despite our unannounced arrival, Olga was pleased to see Lorna and was happy to drop what she was doing to show us around. I learned, without being told, that Lorna’s story was not just important to the two of us, but to others as well. I also saw the influence of religion in her life. Lorna talked with Olga about attending church regularly – I was surprised as she had not mentioned this before. Olga pulled out folders filled with photographs, and we looked through them. This was the first time in my career I had been deliberately shown archival material by an Aboriginal person. Since then, I have been fascinated by the differences between how historians and Aboriginal people engage with archives, how they can be traumatising (Harkin, 2020) but also put to use as ‘unreliable witnesses’ to educate non-Indigenous people as they were in this moment (Sentance, 2019). Now, almost every time I go to Mparntwe, we drop in at the Alice Springs Old Lutheran Church Living History Collection. (A recent visit is depicted in Figure 2.1.) Each visit is an example of Lorna deliberately emplacing me in her story – forcing me to set foot on the Mission block, to meet Olga Radke, to sit and listen, just as she did that first day before the interview could take place later that afternoon. So when she told me this life-changing story later that day, I did not need to imagine the place in which it took place:

One day he asked a question and nobody in the class sort of knew and I didn’t know either and I put my hand up and I gave him an answer and he said, ‘Yeah, that’s right.’ Still today, I tell that story to friends ... you know, my sister-in-law who is one of the church people here and she says, ‘The Holy spirit was working in you ... on that day’. And I think that’s when he also realised that we needed more education. (Wilson, interview, 13 February 2018)

On another visit to Central Australia in May 2020, I was given an understanding of the distance between three places significant to Lorna's childhood: Titjikala, the Rodinga Siding and Mparntwe. In one day we (Wilson, Judd and Ellinghaus) traced in reverse the many journeys that Lorna undertook as a child – from her home with her mother at Titjikala to foster parents or school in South Australia or New South Wales, or into Alice Springs to attend primary school. Sometimes these journeys were in trucks or cars, and sometimes by train. Rodinga Siding was the place where Lorna could catch The Ghan when it was still a narrow-gauge railway (later the route was changed, so it is now simply a 'point of interest' on the road from Alice Springs to Maryvale). Though the historical marker at Rodinga Siding pays attention only to the history of the old Ghan railway, and the contributions of the fettlers who lived in the prefabricated concrete quarters that dominate the site today, Rodinga partially facilitated one of the most important aspects of Albrecht's scheme – the reason why participants insist they were not part of the Stolen Generations – the return of children for summer holidays (Figure 2.2).



Figure 2.2. Intimacy and distance at Rodinga Siding, May 2020.

Photograph: B Judd.

As we drove down the dirt roads (I was glad not to be driving), covering the distance much faster than would have been possible when Lorna was a student, I gained a sense of the way in which mobility and the need to travel was something ingrained in Lorna from a young child. Lorna, of course, did not just travel because of her involvement in Albrecht's scheme. Mobility was part of her everyday life, as it is for many other Indigenous people. Indeed, mobility is a core component of Central Australian Indigenous cultural practices and traditions (Musharbash, 2009; Standfield & Stevens, 2019). Lorna was part of a community that was forcibly relocated from Alice Well to Titjikala before her birth, and as a young child she travelled with her mother and brother by train and mail truck as they followed her biological father. Lorna's childhood was also shaped by extensive family travel, undertaken with her stepfather (a Luritja and Afghan man) as he followed stock and station, working the cattle in the country between Port Augusta, Alice Springs and Birdsville. Lorna is still an intrepid traveller today, and in many ways her life is an example of the concept of 'orbiting' (Burke, 2013).

As well as distance, there is intimacy in this photograph – in my arm around Lorna's shoulders, pulling her to me. We lean against the Land Rover, smiling for the camera. Looking at this photo, I am reminded of Amanda Kearney's work exploring the coexistence of intimacy and distance in Indigenous people's relationship to Country (Kearney, 2018). I wonder about the extent to which the friendship that now exists between Lorna and I is the reason I can now be taken on this journey to Titjikala and be shown these places (Figure 2.3). I think, too, of the homecomings that Lorna experienced, how after travelling such long distances and living with strangers she must have enjoyed being back with her family, particularly her mother. And yet how each homecoming the distances she had travelled and the changes she had made to herself must have come into focus:

Every time I went back after ... being at the college, Mum would buy a new dish, you know? Knife and fork, wherever she could get it, plates, pannikin. 'Don't you drink out of anybody's pannikin. Drink out of your own!' she'd say. She wanted me to be clean all the time. She understood when I went down south that I had to have clean stuff not fresh, but it had to be clean. And she kept all my things washed and cleaned all the time. So she was a good mum. (Wilson, interview, 13 February 2018)



Figure 2.3. Being here matters. Walking back from Lorna showing me where Albrecht used to camp at Titjikala, May 2020.

Photograph: B Judd.

Figure 2.3, taken at Titjikala, shows Lorna telling me how significant it was for Albrecht to make the journey to Titjikala. Titjikala is an Aboriginal community about 100 kilometres south of Mparntwe, situated inside the boundaries of Maryvale cattle station. It is where Lorna spent most of her early childhood. At that time, the people lived in humpies, fetched water from a well on foot, hunted and collected bush tucker to supplement the rations they earned as station workers and domestics. There was no school at Titjikala until the 1970s. I am depicted walking alongside Lorna but, really, I was following her as she walked and talked. Lorna is telling me how the arrival of Albrecht's car was a joyous moment for the community. How his making that journey, again and again, was a demonstration of his commitment – a gift of time and effort – that deepened Albrecht's relationships with the people at Titjikala, and made his arrival cause for celebration. Albrecht's regular visits, and the relationships they enabled him to build, meant that her mother felt comfortable enough to send Lorna into Mparntwe to go to primary school, and later watch her go even further away to high school and to train as a nurse. Behind us and to the left in this photograph, among the trees, is the place where Albrecht camped. Lorna had just led me to a better vantage point so that I can see the exact spot.

Looking at this image now, I think about how those distances that Albrecht travelled, again and again, are mirrored in my own relationship with Lorna, how going back, again and again, is at the heart of the project. In the early days of the project, I felt as though I needed to have an interview set up, or a place to visit, or some outside reason to justify going to Central Australia. Now I simply go, because I finally understand that it is the being there that matters (Judd, 2018) and that the conversations had while travelling are often the most important. As Gibson et al. and Hurst and Maber's chapters in this collection show, history is often made sense of in conversations that take place while people are driving or walking to significant places. I know, too, that as a non-Indigenous researcher from the south, I carry with me the burden of all of my kind, 'the historians' (Leane, 2017), who have come before, and who have taken knowledge and left, and not returned, or have claimed expertise on what Judd calls a 'fly-in and fly-out' basis (Judd, 2018, p. 5). I will never write about the history of Central Australia as an insider or as an expert. Yet that is not a reason to stop. Distance has defined settler Australia in so many ways. Historian Rachel Standfield (2004) has noted how, since the 1990s, mainstream Australians have simultaneously distanced themselves from Australia's dark past, the ongoing disadvantage of Aboriginal people, as well as the extreme right-wing politics of figures such as Pauline Hanson and Andrew Bolt, and positioned themselves as benign. I carry that history with me too. I did not understand it at the time, but in the very first interview that I did with Lorna, the message was there. Keep going back:

He used to come out to Maryvale. And near the creek next to the community, he would camp there. And he would hold a service there under the Bloodwood tree. We would be so happy when we saw the dust of his truck and we could see the dust because the camp is on lower ground and he'd come along on the road was higher. We'd say, 'Ingkarta coming. Ingkarta coming'.¹ And old people to young kids, we would all rush down to the river which was pretty close to where we lived. And he would come, and greet everybody with a smile. And we were happy to see him, we would all line up, the children would hug him and the adults would shake his hand. (Wilson, interview, 13 February 2018)

1 Ingkarta was a term used for a respected leader in the Lutheran Church.

Sweeping the Yard (Judd)

There is a long tradition in Australian photography, starting in the nineteenth century, of Aboriginal people being the subject of staged photographs. As documented in the work of Nettelbeck and Foster (2007), Mounted Constable William Willshire, an infamous character in the history of Alice Springs and Central Australia, once famously commissioned a series of staged photographs in which he situated himself as the bringer of law, order and civilisation to the Arrernte, Luritja and other Aboriginal peoples of the region. In these photos, the long-range rifle and Willshire's command over the Aboriginal men who formed his native police force are emphasised as central components of his 'heroic' nation-building in Central Australia. The staged photos of showbiz promoter Archibald Meston (later protector of Aborigines in Southern Queensland), taken and distributed to promote his circus sideshow-like Wild Australia shows, constitute another famous example (McKay & Memmott, 2016). Historically, staged photographs were used to narrate the story of settler nation-building, civilisation and progress, while representing Aboriginal people as stone-age savages, primitive and treacherous.

The photos shown below (Figures 2.4 and 2.5) were taken when Ellinghaus visited Lorna Wilson on a short field research visit in May 2021 and stayed at her home in Alice Springs. As part of the deal, as she had done in previous visits, Wilson expected Ellinghaus to contribute in ways outside the scope of how the institution of the university defines research work. Over the course of the project, Ellinghaus has learned that entering a working relationship with an Aboriginal Elder and/or knowledge holder comes with the benefits of access to highly sought-after information, but there is also work to do. In return for agreeing to participate in research, Elders and knowledge holders often demand the researcher pay with their time and effort by working on the things that matter most to the Elder. Wilson used Ellinghaus's research visit to exchange historical information for labour directed at the task of house cleaning and yard maintenance.



Figures 2.4 and 2.5. Relationality and the servitude of forging ethical research relationships.

Photographs: L Wilson and J Judd.

The photograph on the left was staged by Ellinghaus and Wilson during Ellinghaus's visit and shows her sweeping up a patio area in Wilson's yard. It was sent to Judd in a text message intended as a humorous commentary on the relationship that had developed between Ellinghaus and Wilson. Significantly, the relationship between the two has remained good, ethical and productive over time because Ellinghaus has come to occupy a subservient role to Wilson as Aboriginal Elder and knowledge holder. It is also significant that, in assuming this position in the relationship, Ellinghaus has also submitted, perhaps unknowingly, to the ethical and cultural frameworks that inform how Wilson acts in the world and understands it to be. The photograph of yard work being undertaken demonstrates just how much the lines between the personal and the professional, between work and life, become blurred or practically meaningless in research situations where the need for relationality is given value and priority. The subservience of Ellinghaus as depicted in Figure 2.4 can also be understood as the outcome of Indigenous ethical frameworks and understandings in action. In Pitjantjatjara the term *ngapartji ngarpartji*, meaning 'in turn' or 'in return', signifies much about how ethical relationships are considered by Aboriginal peoples in Central Australia. *Ngapartji ngarpartji* aptly describes the relationality that has developed between Ellinghaus and

Wilson. A careful balancing act between rights and responsibilities, access rights to knowledge and the cultural obligations that emerge as a result. It is a relationship between two women, one older and one younger, that might be considered 'proper and right' and in accordance with Aboriginal law and culture. It works because both women understand that this is not a relationship of equals.

Several months after Ellinghaus staged her photo, Judd visited Alice Springs and found himself in a similarly subservient position in his relationship with Lorna Wilson, who is his mother. Undertaking the same yard duties that Ellinghaus had carried out months earlier, Judd staged the photo as a parody of the original. Sending it by text to Ellinghaus, both photographs have become the basis of a standing joke about what constructing research practices built on relationality with Aboriginal people means in terms of the various expectations this may give rise to. Yard duties and house cleaning is a cost Ellinghaus has deemed to be fair. For Judd, the staged photographs showing yard work replacing research work as the primary reason for visiting Wilson in Alice Springs is a reminder that skin names bequeathed, and knowledge and wisdom passed on, never come for free. Looking beyond the intended humour of these photographs, Judd believes they pose serious questions for academic researchers about whether they are personally equipped to submit themselves to a situation of subservience to an Aboriginal Elder in accordance with Aboriginal law, culture and ethics. Thinking about the photographs prompted him to send a copy of Kim Mahood's (2012) essay 'Kartiya Are Like Toyotas: White Workers on Australia's Cultural Frontier' to Ellinghaus with the message 'doesn't this sound familiar?' Mahood's essay describes the unhealthy dynamic experienced by kartiya (non-Indigenous people) in remote communities who rush in with good intentions but are unable to withstand the pressures of the job and leave, only to be replaced by other unprepared do-gooders. Mahood writes about the 'legacy of expectation and dependency, coupled with one of failure and disappointment' that is created by this process. The interactions between Ellinghaus and Wilson depicted in this essay certainly bear the weight of this phenomenon. Humour is our chosen method of dealing with this without dismissing it. For Ellinghaus, both the jokes and the housework are ways of following Sara Ahmed's (2004, p. 59) call:

for white subjects ... to stay implicated in what they critique, but in turning towards their role and responsibility in these histories of racism, as histories of this present, to turn away from themselves, and towards others.

Conclusion

It seems both sad and hopeful to publish an essay about the importance of visits to place so soon after the lockdowns and travel bans of the global pandemic. Mobility has been necessary to deepening our understandings of the Indigenous people and communities whom we represent through our collaborative writings. In this essay, we have focused on photographs not as evidence of past colonial violence, nor as ways to commemorate or repatriate history, nor as documents that need decolonised reframings through creative practice. Rather, we have used them as evidence of the experiential learnings in place that have been critical to our ability to strengthen and maintain our research collaboration. As Elizabeth Edwards (2015, p. 248) argues, ‘ultimately photographs are evidence of affect, of how people feel, and think and negotiate their world’. These images commemorate moments when the past is being remembered and communicated in ways that are deeply meaningful, even when meant as a joke. They depict communication that is only made possible by personal relationships that exist between the photographed and the photographer, relationships built over time by the simple but important method of visiting, returning and visiting again.

Acknowledgements

This chapter was written on Wurundjeri and Dja Dja Wurrung Country, and we acknowledge the Traditional Owners of Central Australia. We also thank Lorna Wilson for her editorial advice, and Beth Marsden for expert research assistance. This research is supported by ARC DP200103269.

References

- Ahmed, S. (2004). Declarations of whiteness: The non-performativity of anti-racism. *Borderlands e-Journal*, 3(2). webarchive.nla.gov.au/awa/20050616083826/http://www.borderlandsejournal.adelaide.edu.au/vol3no2_2004/ahmed_declarations.htm
- Aird, M. (2015). Tactics of survival: Images of Aboriginal women and domestic service. In V. Haskins & C. Lowrie (Eds.), *Colonization and domestic service: Historical and contemporary perspectives* (pp. 182–190). Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group.

- Andrew, B. & Neath, J. (2018). Encounters with legacy images: Decolonising and re-imagining photographic evidence from the colonial archive. *History of Photography*, 42(3), 217–238. doi.org/10.1080/03087298.2018.1440933
- Azoulay, A. (2008). *The civil contract of photography*. Zone Books.
- Birch, T. (2006). Testimony (archive box no. 4). *Aboriginal History*, 30, 29–32. doi.org/10.22459/ah.30.2011.03
- Birch, T. (2013). The trouble with history. In A. Clark & P. Ashton, (Eds.), *Australian history now* (pp. 232–250). UNSW Press.
- Bradley, J. (2014). *Singing saltwater Country: Journey to the songlines of Carpentaria*. Allen & Unwin.
- Burke, P. (2013). Indigenous diaspora and the prospects for cosmopolitan ‘orbiting’: The Warlpiri case. *Asia Pacific Journal of Anthropology*, 14(4), 304–322, doi.org/10.1080/14442213.2013.804870
- Corn, A. (2018). Joe Gumbula, the Ancestral chorus, and the value of Indigenous knowledges. *Preservation, Digital Technology & Culture*, 47(3–4), 77–90. doi.org/10.1515/pdtc-2018-0027
- Corn, A. & Patrick, W. J. (2018). Home within: Locating a Warlpiri approach to developing and applying an Indigenous educational philosophy in Australian contexts. In J. Petrovic & R. M. Mitchell (Eds.), *Indigenous philosophies of education around the world* (pp. 168–194). Taylor & Francis. doi.org/10.4324/9781315173603-9
- Edwards, E. (2015). Anthropology and photography: A long history of knowledge and affect. *Photographies*, 8(3), 235–252. doi.org/10.1080/17540763.2015.1103088
- Ellinghaus, K. & Judd, B. (2020). Writing as kin: Producing ethical histories through collaboration in unexpected places. Researching F. W. Albrecht, assimilation policy and Lutheran experiments in Aboriginal education. In S. Maddison & S. Nakata (Series Eds.), *Questioning Indigenous-settler relations: Indigenous perspectives. Indigenous-settler relations in Australia and the world series: Vol. 1* (pp. 55–68). Springer.
- Graham-Stewart, M. & McWhannell, F. (2017). *Bitter fruit: Australian photographs to 1963*. Michael Graham-Stewart.
- Grieves, G. (2005). The politics and ethics of writing Indigenous histories. *Melbourne Historical Journal*, 33, 1–5.

- Harkin, N. (2020). Weaving the colonial archive: A basket to lighten the load, *Journal of Australian Studies*, 44(2), 154–166. doi.org/10.1080/14443058.2020.1754276
- Hughes, K. & Trevorrow, E. (2018). ‘The nation is coming to life’: Law, sovereignty, and belonging in Ngarrindjeri photography of the mid-twentieth century. *History of Photography*, 42(3), 249–268. doi.org/10.1080/03087298.2018.1521571
- Judd, B. (2018). Introduction to special issue: Being here matters. *Learning Communities: International Journal of Learning in Social Contexts [Special Issue: Ethical relationships, ethical research in Aboriginal contexts: Perspectives from central Australia]*, 23, 2–11. doi.org/10.18793/LCJ2018.23.01
- Judd, B. & Ellinghaus, K. (2020). F. W. Albrecht, assimilation policy and the education of Aboriginal girls in Central Australia: Overcoming disciplinary decadence in Australian history. *Journal of Australian Studies* 44(2), 167–181. doi.org/10.1080/14443058.2020.1754275
- Kearney, A. (2018). Intimacy and distance: Indigenous relationships to Country in Northern Australia. *Ethnos*, 83(1), 172–191. doi.org/10.1080/00141844.2016.1236827
- Kearney, A. (2019). Interculturalism and responsive reflexivity in a settler colonial context. *Religions*, 10(3), 199–217. doi.org/10.3390/rel10030199
- Leane, J. (2017) Historians. *Overland, Oodgeroo Noonuccal Poetry Prize Issue*. overland.org.au/previous-issues/2017-oodgeroo-noonuccal/poetry-prize-jeanine-leane/
- Lydon, J. (2006). *Eye contact: Photographing Indigenous Australians*. Duke University Press. doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv125jfq
- Lydon, J. (2012). *Flash of recognition: Photography and the emergency of Indigenous rights*. New South Publishing.
- Lydon, J. (2016). *Photography, humanitarianism, empire*. Bloomsbury. doi.org/10.5040/9781474235532
- Mahood, K. (2012). Kariya are like Toyotas. *Griffith Review*, 36, 26–46.
- McGrath, P. F. & Brooks, D. (2010). *Their Darkest Hour*: The films and photographs of William Grayden and the history of the ‘Warburton Range controversy’ of 1957. *Aboriginal History*, 34, 115–141. doi.org/10.22459/ah.34.2011.05
- McKay, J. & Memmott, P. (2016). Staged savagery: Archibald Meston and his Indigenous exhibits. *Aboriginal History*, 40, 181–203. doi.org/10.22459/AH.40.2016.07

- Moreton-Robinson, A. (2016). Relationality: A key presupposition of an Indigenous social research paradigm. In J. M. O'Brien & C. Andersen, (Eds.), *Sources and methods in Indigenous studies* (pp. 69–77). Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group.
- Musharbash, Y. (2009). *Yuendumu everyday: Contemporary life in remote Aboriginal Australia*. Aboriginal Studies Press.
- Nakata, N. M., Nakata, V., Keech, S. & Bolt, R. (2012). Decolonial goals and pedagogies for Indigenous studies. *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society* 1(1), 120–140.
- Nettelbeck, A. & Foster, R. (2007). *In the name of the law: William Willshire and the policing of the Australian frontier*. Wakefield Press.
- Peters-Little, F. (2010). Introduction. In F. Peters-Little, A. Curthoys & J. Docker (Eds.), *Passionate histories: Myth, memory and Indigenous Australia* (pp. 1–6). ANU Press. doi.org/10.22459/PH.09.2010
- Sentance, N. (2019, September). Colonial archives: Archival poetics. *Sydney Review of Books*. sydneyreviewofbooks.com/review/natalie-harkin-archival-poetics/
- Standfield, R. (2004). 'A remarkably tolerant nation?': Constructions of benign whiteness in Australian political discourse. *Borderlands e-journal*, 3(2). webarchive.nla.gov.au/awa/20050616083909/http://www.borderlandsejournal.adelaide.edu.au/vol3no2_2004/standfield_tolerantnation.htm
- Standfield, R. & Stevens, M. (2019). New histories but old patterns: Kāi Tahu in Australia. In V. Stead & J. Altman (Eds.), *Labour lines and colonial power: Indigenous and Pacific Islander labour mobility in Australia* (pp. 103–132). ANU Press. doi.org/10.22459/LLCP.2019.05
- Tuck, E. & Yang, K. W. (2012). Decolonization is not a metaphor. *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society*, 1(1), 1–40.

This text is taken from *Memory in Place: Locating colonial histories and commemoration*, edited by Cameo Dalley and Ashley Barnwell, published 2023 by ANU Press, The Australian National University, Canberra, Australia.

doi.org/10.22459/MP.2023.02