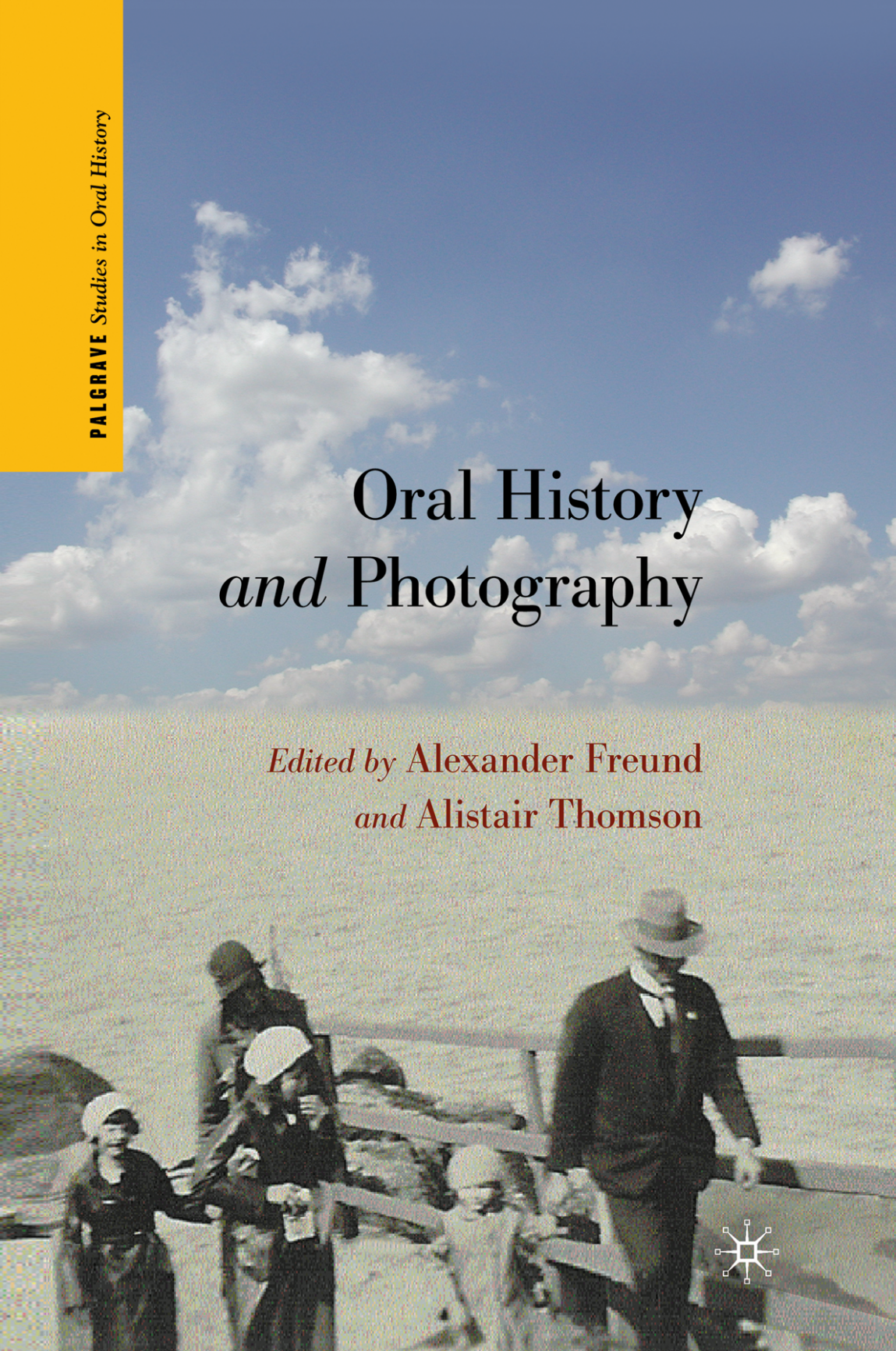
PALGRAVE *Studies in Oral History*

Oral History *and* Photography

Edited by Alexander Freund *and* Alistair Thomson



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Oral History and Photography

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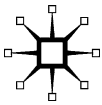

ORAL HISTORY AND PHOTOGRAPHY

Softcover reprint of the hardcover 1st edition 2011 978-0-230-10460-0

First published in 2011 by
PALGRAVE MACMILLAN®
in the United States—a division of St. Martin's Press LLC,
175 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10010.

Where this book is distributed in the UK, Europe and the rest of the world, this is by Palgrave Macmillan, a division of Macmillan Publishers Limited, registered in England, company number 785998, of Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire RG21 6XS.

Palgrave Macmillan is the global academic imprint of the above companies and has companies and representatives throughout the world.

ISBN 978-1-349-28917-2 ISBN 978-0-230-12009-9 (eBook)
DOI 10.1057/9780230120099
Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data is available from the Library of Congress.

A catalogue record of the book is available from the British Library.

Design by Newgen Imaging Systems (P) Ltd., Chennai, India.

First edition: October 2011

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Transferred to Digital Printing in 2012

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Series Editors' Foreword

"One picture is worth a thousand words" resonates as a familiar cliché. For the historian, however, a picture is worth a great deal of analysis. It provides a snapshot of a certain point in time. It is a piece of evidence to be interpreted. It evokes memories. As Alexander Freund and Alistair Thomson, the editors of this volume, suggest, in tandem with oral history, photography intersects at points of evidence, memory, and storytelling. Yet there is something more to understanding this intersection than the use of a photo as a mnemonic device.

The contributors to this volume understand that using photos during an oral history interview helps to *construct* the past as well as reveal, recover, or retell it. Photography and oral history involve two essential senses, sight and sound. Together they can enhance our understanding of past events or complicate and obscure the same. A happy image may invoke the opposite in the words of a narrator, who offers a back story that provides surprising information. Smiling family photos sometimes mask tension and trauma. Interviews often provide new meaning to photographs. An individual's revisiting photos over long periods of time can contribute to conflicting interviews by the same person. The complexity of uniting photography and oral history is substantial and the union is not neutral. As the editors point out, the "gap in meaning between photograph and oral narrative . . . is a focus of most essays in this collection." Such a focus adds to the methodological understanding and practice of oral history, which this series encourages. Other volumes such as Della Pollock's *Remembering: Oral History Performance* and the forthcoming, *Place, Writing, and Voice in Oral History* emphasize significant methodological approaches, but method and theory are important to all of the more than two dozen volumes that comprise the Palgrave Studies in Oral History series to date. Our goal, however, in addition to encouraging methodological rigor, is to offer our readers the best that oral history provides in vital narrative, significant substance, and topical relevance.

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Acknowledgments

Photographs are more than simply illustrations of past lives, but they are also not that at all. They are historical documents and triggers of memories and stories, but they often fail to be either, and often they can be much more. Oral history and photography are interconnected in complex and until now largely unexplored ways. We came to the topic of oral history and photography through two different oral history projects on two different continents but with the same questions: How can oral historians best use photographs in their work? What do we make of our interviewees' often perplexing responses to photographs? In particular, why did family snap shots of smiling people so often evoke tears of sadness and tales of pain? Why did narrators not talk about what *we* saw in the photographs, and instead seemed to go off on "tangents"? And why have oral historians, who have used photographs from the beginning of their practice, written so little about their work with images? A response to these questions was overdue.

In designing this essay collection, we strove, as much as was possible without funding for translation, to gather perspectives and experiences from around the world. We believe we have succeeded, at least to some degree. Our contributors are from Australia, Brazil, Canada, Germany, the United Kingdom, and the United States. As is typical of the field of oral history, this is also a multi-disciplinary collection. Our authors hail from the fields of art history, communications, cultural studies, education, fine arts, history, social anthropology, and sociology. They include freelancers, teachers, and artists as well as junior and senior scholars. They report on diverse experiences and answer not only our own questions but also many others: how do people use photographs to perform their life stories? What is the role of political photographers in repressive regimes? How do photographs construct, support, and undermine identity? What is the difference between using photographs pulled out of a shoebox, and photographs in carefully assembled albums? Can photographs preserve memories? How do our bodies respond to images? What are the politics of using photographs in oral history?

An essay collection such as this is the work of many people, not only that of the authors and editors. On behalf of our contributors, we thank, first of all, our many interviewees from around the world who gave so generously of their time, their lives, and their often prized and most intimate possessions—their stories

and their photographs. As always, without the voluntary efforts of our narrators, there would be no book. On behalf of our contributors, we also thank the many colleagues who for the past two years have been drawn into discussions and asked to read drafts of essays.

We thank our contributors for their enthusiasm and cooperation, and for expanding our views on oral history and photography in ways we could not have imagined. We also thank Linda Shopes and Bruce Stave for their enthusiastic support of this project and the insightful advice along the way; Samantha Hasey and Sarah Whalen, editorial assistants, and Chris Chappell, editor, at Palgrave, for their support and gently keeping us on track. We thankfully acknowledge a print subsidy by the Chair in German-Canadian Studies at the University of Winnipeg.

Alex thanks Andriy Nahachewsky and his other research partners as well as Leslie Hall, Christine Kampen, Matt Scalena, Angela Thiessen, and other research assistants in the *Local Culture and Diversity on the Prairies Project*, who first drew him to the question of photography in oral history; Angela Thiessen for pursuing a compelling case study; Ron J. Grele, Alexander v. Plato, and Penny Tinkler for early discussions; Ian Keenan for probing questions; and Catherine-Lune Grayson for new perspectives and insights on photography projects around the world. I thank my mother, and my sister and her family for fun times, good food, interest, and love on my visits to Hamburg and via mail, phone, email, and Skype.

Al thanks the four women in our Moving Stories project (Phyl Cave, Gwen Good, Joan Pickett, and Dorothy Wright) for sharing their photographs and memories and helping me to see the connections between memories, stories and images. Thanks too to members of the Melbourne Life Writing Group and my Monash History Department Research Group for their comments on drafts of my writing, and especially to Katie Holmes, Jim Mitchell, Dorothy Sheridan, and Siân Edwards.

Introduction: Oral History and Photography

Alexander Freund and Alistair Thomson

> But photographs cannot tell stories. They can only provide evidence of stories, and evidence is mute; it demands investigation and interpretation. Looked at in this way, as evidence of something beyond itself, a photograph can best be understood not as an answer or an end to inquiry, but as an invitation to look more closely, and to ask questions.
>
> —Phillip Gourevitch[1]

> We have all heard it said that one picture is worth a thousand words. Yet, if this statement is true, why does it have to be a saying? Because a picture is worth a thousand words only under special conditions—which commonly include a context of words in which the picture is set.
>
> —Walter J. Ong[2]

This book is about the "photographic turn" in oral history. Historians' interest in photographs—their "discovery of old photographs"—dates back, according to Raphael Samuel's observations in Great Britain, to the early 1960s.[3] Historians back then evaluated their visual evidence much less critically than their traditional textual sources, treating photographs, as Samuel criticized, as "transparent reflections of fact."[4] Cultural and family historians as well as archivists seized on photographs in the 1970s, concentrating on their assumedly self-evident informational value.[5] Over the last two decades, the use of photographs has come under greater critical scrutiny. In turning the object of its research into a category of analysis, the discipline of history has moved toward a "pictorial turn," a "visual turn," an "iconic turn," or, more focused, a "turn to photography."[6]

Oral history, as Samuel noted, was from the beginning intertwined with photography—not methodologically, but in the historians' belief that without oral history, as without photography, "history was dead."[7] This belief was most obviously expressed in a "flood of 'We-Remember' books which poured out of the local and community presses" in Great Britain during the 1970s.[8] Popular oral history often, and rather nostalgically, used the family album "as a device for family reconstitution and opening up memory lanes."[9] Schools, too, seized on photographs and oral histories for their "graphic representation of otherness."[10] This was an international phenomenon. In the early 1970s, Lil McIntosh, a librarian in British Columbia, Canada, "had a lady come into a classroom with me . . . and I taped her speaking about the pictures that were in front of us all. They were her pictures of her life when she had come to Fraser Lake, in 1910, when she was four years old. There wasn't a lack of interest at all; she was a good subject to bring to the classroom."[11] Similarly, the Foxfire project in the Appalachians in Georgia, United States, taught high school students to explore their local culture and community through oral history and photography.[12] In several European countries, history workshops interviewed contemporary witnesses and collected local photographs. The Oral History Centre at the National Archives of Singapore used photography extensively in several projects documenting vanishing trades or communities of Singapore. In New Zealand the History Group of the Ministry for Culture and Heritage has produced many books and, more recently, web-based publications that combine recorded memories and both official and personal photographs.[13]

Thus, it has long been common practice in oral history to use photographs. This is not surprising. Oral history and photography intersect at important epistemic points: evidence, memory, and storytelling. Both are used as forms of evidence; both require "memory work"; and both are forms of storytelling. Despite these intersections, oral historians find little guidance in their literature on the use of photographs in oral history. All of the major English-language oral history guides and handbooks mention photographs only in passing, if at all. Photographs, these guides suggest, should be sought out from interviewees as further documentation and they may be used as memory triggers. The guides are silent on how exactly oral historians should go about using photographs to stimulate memories and they do not suggest other understandings of photographs beyond that of social documentation.[14] Beyond guides, there are few case studies that explore the theoretical and methodological implications of using photographs in oral history work.[15]

This lack of reflection and discussion on the systematic use of photographs in oral history may explain why oral historians' use of photographs has been sporadic and narrow. Most oral history publications do not include photographs, and if they do, they often serve only as illustrations.[16] When oral historians use photographs as memory triggers, they seldom reflect on this practice in their

publications. In the few cases that oral historians have integrated photographs into their analysis, they have done so mostly by understanding photographs as a historical source of further information about the past. In this quest for more historical facts, oral historians have used photographs in two ways: as documents of social history and as mnemonic devices.

First, oral historians have read photographs like other sources as documents of social history, that is, as containers of facts about past events and experiences. The interview can help in "discovering," as Paul Thompson writes in *The Voice of the Past*, "written documents and photographs which would not have otherwise been traced."[17] This discovery would take place after the interview: "Do not rush away after the recording session," Thompson counsels, "be prepared to chat about the family and photographs."[18] Thompson stresses the fruitfulness of "combining" testimonies with photographs, and he warns that "social images of 'respectable' or 'happy families' determine what photographs are taken, just as a similar decision is made about what is kept for the album."[19] Linda Shopes advised in 1980: "Sensitively interpreted, [family photographs] can suggest much about 'what life was like' years ago."[20] And Samuel wrote in 1994: "Deconstruction, using photographs in conjunction with oral testimonies and written documents, splicing together different classes of evidence, or using one to expose the silences and absences of the other, is one procedure which historians can bring to bear on the explication and interpretation of old photographs."[21] Oral historians have also been advised to bring a camera to the interview to take pictures of the interviewee, material objects, and living surroundings, or, better still, to bring along a photographer to take a series of photographs that can then be matched with the interviews.[22]

These have been fruitful suggestions, but they are far from the concrete advice that oral historians need for a systematic and reflexive use and interpretation of photographs. The essays in this collection provide, through their case studies, a number of approaches to using photographs as social documents. At the same time, however, the authors in this book go beyond this traditional use of photographs by questioning the epistemic status of photographs—at least as they are used in oral history—as historical documents. Thus, they are interested not only in *what* is depicted in the picture, but also in *how* the producer depicted it, and how the interviewee as well as the interviewer use it in the context of oral history.

Second, oral historians have used photographs to "stimulate the narrator to remember," to trigger recall, as Valerie Raleigh Yow, Donald A. Ritchie, and many others write.[23] From the beginning, oral historians were alert to the complexity of recall through photographs. Sherna Gluck counseled in 1977 to view photographs early on in the project and "to let the tape recorder run as [the interviewee] comments on her photo album . . . Although the material should be recorded again later, in the context of the period in which it took place, the second version of the

story might be quite different from the first rendition—which could become a lost gem were we not to record when the memory spontaneously surfaced."[24] Paul Thompson warned: "Experiments have shown that it is relatively easy to generate false memories by feeding people with a mixture of genuine and misleading stimulants to memory such as photographs."[25]

Again, this has been valuable advice, but—despite Yow's sample questions about the content and provenance of photographs—insufficient to help oral historians use photographs more systematically. This essay collection offers a number of approaches to using photographs as memory triggers, ranging from various forms of visual life-story telling (Freund and Thiessen, Thomson, Schiebel and Robel) and thematic photo-review (Ryan, Thompson, Mauad) to photo-album review (Tinkler) and anthropological photo-elicitation (Mannik), to commemorative photographing (Wilton), repatriation of photographs (Payne), and presentation in exhibits and online (Bersch and Grant, Marles). The essays move beyond the use of photographs as mnemonic devices to a reflection on how differently memories are evoked by different methods and how memories may either not be stimulated at all or may be so overwhelming that they cannot be expressed.

Certainly, using photographs as documents and as mnemonic devices has served oral historians well. Countless oral history interviews include more and richer detail about life in the past because photographs stimulated memories. There are fine publications that have included both historical photographs and photographs taken alongside oral histories. The best are the results of cooperation between oral historians and photographers. Milton Rogovin and Michael H. Frisch's *Portraits in Steel* is an example of the combined power of photography and oral testimony. In some cases, the visual and oral documents were mounted as exhibitions.[26] Tamara Hareven and Randolph Langenbach reported that Langenbach's exhibition of photographs dramatically changed the interviewing process, because it was only after seeing historical photographs and portraits of themselves that townspeople and workers understood the historical significance of their lives and the necessity to tell their stories.[27] In their study of Homestead, Pennsylvania, United States, Judith Modell and Charles Brodsky developed an interviewing method that (reversing Gluck's method) asked first for an oral narrative and then for a response to archival photographs, photographs taken by Brodsky, and family photographs. They then analyzed the relationship between oral narrative and "visual story."[28] Marjorie L. McLellan interviewed members of a Pomeranian immigrant farming family in Wisconsin, United States, to understand the regional and family history in the context of which the family had produced several thousand early-twentieth-century photographs and accompanying artifacts and documents.[29]

Rather than brushing aside this fine work, this essay collection seeks to extend the inquiry into the relationship between image, oral narrative, and

memory. Gourevitch and Ong have pointed out, as quoted at the beginning of our introduction, that images need stories to create meaning—or rather, in order to imbue images with meaning, we tell stories about them, whether silently to ourselves as we view a picture and speculate on what happened before the depiction of a scene, or out loud to others. But the opposite is also true: we tell narratives through imagery. Images and stories, Ricoeur argues, are linked to time and thus to the past and to memory.[30] If we want to understand the people we interview—people who grew up in a visual world—we need to know their images, or at least a few of them. And if we want to understand how they were shaped by images, we have to ask them to tell us about them. This is no easy task. This book attempts to provide a few answers.

Photography critics have approached this task by pointing to the complex relationship between photographs and language. Photographs do not say more than a thousand words and they do not speak for themselves. As James C. Curtis argues, photographs are mute: "It is as if the image provides a fact, but the word provides the meaning."[31] Words invest photographs with meaning, and oral historians must be alert to the multiple narratives that are ascribed to the images they discuss with their interviewees. As H. Porter Abbott argues, each image is already invested with narrative. When we look at an image, our "narrative consciousness" is automatically activated: "We want to know not just what is there, but also what happened." And if the story is not explicitly stated in the image, we will make one up by drawing on the "many narrative templates in our minds."[32] Another narrative told through pictures is generated by their arrangement, for instance, the order of photographs in an album.[33] Often, photographs and albums come with captions, thus providing yet another narrative. As Jacquelyn Dowd Hall reminds us, there is also the story of the photograph's production, a story that may be quite mysterious if the relationship between the photographer and the photographed person is intimate yet characterized by the photographer's absence from the images: "She is behind the camera, which secretly evokes her presence yet hides it from history's prying eyes."[34] In interviews, we can collect our interviewee's narratives about the photographs and their production as well as about our interviewees' lives—two often separate and even contradictory stories that may tell of happy images and sad experiences. And then there are the stories we as historians tell about the photographs and our interviewees' use of them.

Multiple meanings and the in-between gaps are evidence that the narratives woven around photographs are not merely additions to the stories told in "traditional" oral history interviews. Rather, they often run counter to what we could call "master life stories"—the life stories we feel comfortable telling ourselves and others. Memories evoked by photographs are not simply memories in addition to those recalled through narrating. These are often repressed or suppressed—rather than simply "forgotten"—memories that undermine and contradict personal "master memories" as often as they enhance or nuance them. As several

authors in this collection demonstrate, photography-evoked memories come as often with silences as with words.

Most of our contributors explore the relationship between image, oral narrative, and memory through their practice as oral historians, albeit from various disciplines, rather than as photographers or photography critics (although Carol Payne is a photo studies scholar and Al Bersch and Leslie Grant are also photographers). The authors explore the multiple layers of meaning different viewers invest in photographs before, during, and after the oral history interview. They also investigate the complex ways in which photographs not only trigger but also shape memory and how photographs are in turn seen or read through memory. Thus, this essay collection offers readers approaches to using photographs as more than social documents and mnemonic devices.

We have decided to focus on photographs and to leave out other forms of images, including video. Video recording in oral history is commonly used as an alternative to audio recording and as such poses very different questions about the relationship between image and narrative. The use of historical video or film footage—in a way that parallels the use of photographs discussed in this collection—is explored in archivists' oral history interviews with donors of films or in social-psychological inquiries into the influence of film on memory.[35] These practices await further investigation.

Another major gap is that of digital imaging and the creation of "mediated memories."[36] Digital photography changes how we take pictures, how we interact with pictures and picture-taking, how we use pictures, and how it changes the pictures themselves. Increasingly, people have their family "albums" on their computers instead of or in addition to the hard copy albums. More and more people scan and digitize their analog memory objects, such as diaries and letters, music and other sound recordings, photographs, and home movies.[37] What challenges will these changes present to oral historians using photographs? How will oral historians respond to this new digital image interaction? Alistair Thomson gives a glimpse of how digital technology changes oral historians' use of photographs: he digitized the photographs that the interviewees had loaned him and then together they looked at the pictures on his laptop. This was more than simple convenience. The pictures were blown up, much bigger—new and important details could be seen and commented upon. Digital technologies also affect how people use photographs. Ian Keenan writes, "The simple abundance of digital images has altered, in my family, the way in which photographs are used as material, ritual objects." Think of the digital photo frame: instead of one iconic family photograph on the mantelpiece, we can now show dozens or thousands of photographs in an endless loop. Keenan concludes, "While the photographic medium remains important in our self-portrayal, the role of individual images is lessened."[38] Moreover, further individualization is, as van Dijck (following Barbara Harrison) argues, another result of digital photography: "Self-presentation—rather than family

re-presentation—has become a major function of photographs" over the last two decades.[39] At the same time, while not new to the digital age, pictures can be more easily manipulated and it is harder to detect such manipulation.[40] We also need to be concerned about preservation. As with all digital files, digital photographs' duration of survival is unclear. With each missed step in migrating images to the next software and hardware, will we lose billions of pictures? And will this spread evenly across populations, or affect especially those who cannot afford to continually upgrade, who do not have the skills to transfer, or who do not have the time to preserve their digital albums? At the same time, a certain number of pictures are uploaded to various Internet sites such as Flickr or Facebook. This is a new form of sharing photographs with wider circles of family and friends, and even strangers. This dramatic change in visual culture changes how we remember the past through photographs. It is not yet clear, however, what the changes will be. In 50 years will we still be able to ask interviewees to select their ten most memorable photographs, and then sit down with them to browse through their albums? Although we do not tackle these questions in this collection, oral historians will eventually have to address them.

Indeed, our focus is to some extent even narrower: Half of the essays deal with family photographs, another five with photographs that were either originally shot or later reinterpreted as private or personal photographs. The essay collection was not designed in this way, but, we believe, the preponderance of family and personal photographs is intrinsic to current oral history practice.

It is tricky business to define a photograph as a personal or family photo. Milton Guran's pictures of the Brazilian military government (discussed by Ana Mauad) were taken as press photographs of public events, but, as Martina Schiebel and Yvone Robel show, people may well reframe press photographs of themselves as family photos, thus blurring or even erasing the boundary between public and private photos. Similarly, Kathleen M. Ryan demonstrates that propaganda photos find their ways into family albums. As Al Bersch and Leslie Grant show, private photographs become public when mounted in exhibitions or, as Janet Elizabeth Marles did, when they are published online.

There is a category of photographs, however, that is largely missing from this book and that is seldom classified as family photographs. Those are the pictures that Susan Sontag writes about in *Regarding the Pain of Others*.[41] There are no photographs of violence or war in this collection. Oral history investigates atrocities and human rights violations as much as photographers do. Yet, we seldom ask people to talk about the photographs that confront them and us in the news media every day (and survivors of violence rarely have their own photographs of persecution to share and discuss in interviews).[42] These "media icons" and "key pictures" of "violence, war, and genocide; revolution and transition; gender and generation; mobility (national, geographic, social); medialization (politics, propaganda, advertising); science and technology" have shaped, according to

some historians, the "image canon of cultural memory."[43] Whether or how this is actually so is open to debate. Oral historians have a distinct vantage point for launching this inquiry, because they can ask people directly how they make sense of such images and how such images shape their lives. At the same time, the lack of atrocity photographs in our research points in another direction as well, namely, the scarcity of oral history research on perpetrators. The postcards of Jim Crow-era public lynchings, as well as soldiers' snap shots of the German army's mass killings in Poland during World War II, and the U.S. Army's crimes in Abu Ghraib prove that atrocity photos have been part of family albums for a long time.[44]

This is not to say, however, that the photographs in this collection are all happy images. It is true, as Marjorie L. McLellan writes, that "[p]rofound emotions of loss, death, anger, and bitterness are expressed in stories rather than in the trite photographs of funeral bouquets."[45] But as several authors demonstrate, "happy-memory"-photographs can evoke painful memories. Furthermore, as Penny Tinkler shows in this book, photographs torn out of albums leave material traces of "profound emotions of loss, death, anger, and bitterness." Publicly instrumentalized happy photographs—be it a wedding photo hung on a dining-room wall or propaganda photos used by a government at war—that cover up stories of pain, abuse, and humiliation are, as this collection shows, widespread. It is often this insidious abyss between meanings that oral historians wish to understand.

In their quest to make sense of personal and family photos, oral historians look to the pioneering work of Marjorie L. McLellan. "[P]hotographs and stories, the stuff of family nostalgia," McLellan writes about her case study, "offered dramatic windows on both the history of rural immigrant life and the processes by which a family constructed its identity."[46] She shows that just like oral narratives, photographs are subjective, and may be fictive, even to the point that photographs are intentionally fabricated as evidence. "[T]he photographer and his subjects imaginatively construct images in a picture-taking event," McLellan writes.[47] In her case study, the family had dressed up in period costumes and used old farm equipment to display, like in a tableau vivante, scenes of their ancestors' farming life. Few of us go to the same extent of designing photographs, but when we pose, often smiling, with a babe in arms, on a voyage to a new country, in front of a new car, or surrounded by friends, we similarly perform a scene as our life. Most family photographs, even those called snap shots, are posed.

The darkroom fixer does not fix the photograph's meaning. Different viewers, as McLellan alerts historians, bring "personal experience and associations to the image"[48] and thus affix different meanings to the same image. Meanings also change over time. "Family photographs gather meaning from the way families use them," McLellan writes. With changing needs, photographs gain new currency. Initially, photographs may be used to recall birthdays, weddings, and picnics.

Later, it may become "more important to know how someone looked when they were young than it is to recall particular events."[49] Similarly, the authors in this collection, familiar, as oral historians, with the performative aspects of interviews, analyze photographs as a rhetoric of memory.

Two scholars in particular have advanced our thinking about the relationship between oral narratives and photographs, about performance, rhetoric, and images. They too have focused on family photographs and family albums. Martha Langford investigates the "striking" "parallels between orality and photography." She argues that even if we cannot interview anyone about a family album, we can nevertheless discover oral tradition that originally accompanied the album in its contents and structure: "the organization of photographs into albums," she writes, "has been one way of preserving the structures of oral tradition for new uses in the present." She alerts oral historians to the fact that posing does not only happen at the time of releasing the shutter, but every time the photograph is presented: "The showing and telling of an album is a performance."[50] This means that while orality and visuality are related, stories about photographs are structured in a different way than other kinds of oral narratives. Thus, the authors in this book also examine what one could call the oral-visual performance during the interview.

Marianne Hirsch also looks at family photographs, including those of her own family, as well as the stories woven around those photographs, which constitute, as she says following W. J. T. Mitchell, "imagetexts." Photographs and albums, she argues, create a "familial gaze" that "frame" and thus make families, but in an ideological fashion: "photographer and viewer collaborate on the reproduction of ideology." The stories, however, serve to undermine ideology: "The composite imagetexts . . . both expose and resist the conventions of family photography and hegemonic familial ideologies."[51] Like Langford, Hirsch suggests that imagetexts' power to constitute individual subjects lingers on beyond the generation of the depicted and depicters. "Postmemory" is the term Hirsch uses to describe these powerful lingering effects of memory on succeeding generations—a memory rooted in a family's oral tradition rather than lived experiences.

That so much analysis of photographs and oral narratives should focus on private and family photographs is not surprising. Oral historians are interested in private and family life. Within oral history this is an imbalance that needs to be addressed (but not in this volume). Yet, the focus on private life is also a political stance vis-à-vis a dominant history that eschews private life, be it in the form of life stories or family photographs. One need only look to historical surveys and textbooks to see historians' disinterest in family and private imagetexts.

Oral history's "photographic turn" happens at an important moment in time. History's turn to the image is, according to Doris Bachmann-Medick, a reaction to the dominance of the word in the social sciences and humanities. The pictorial turn is also a reaction to the "picture revolution" since the second half

of the nineteenth century and particularly the increasing circulation of images through mass media and now through the Internet.[52] Photography was among the first visual media to be mass produced and circulated.[53] It was so from its very inception in 1839.[54] The "carte-de-visite" (invented in 1854), a small photograph mounted on a slightly larger card, "was the first attempt at a form of mass production of popular photographs." Collecting visiting cards of family as well as royalty and celebrities became a craze among the middle classes, who organized them in albums, sent them to relatives, and traded them with friends.[55] Other forms of mass images certainly preceded family photography, for example in the form of pictures on billboards or magazines such as *Illustrated London News*. In the twentieth century, new kinds of visual images, especially moving images, and new forms of mass distribution—cinemas, television, the Internet—increased our exposure to and focus on visual representations of the world.

What exactly is this turn to the visual and how does it affect oral history? What marks this development as a "turn"? Historians' increasing interest in and use of photographs alone does not constitute a "turn." Rather, the image—in our case, the photograph—is turned, as Bachmann-Medick explains, from an object of investigation into a category of analysis.[56] Hence, in recent historical investigations, as Jennifer Tucker explains, "the photograph serves not only as a historical document or source, but also as a reflexive medium that exposes the stakes of historical study by revealing the constructed nature of what constitutes historical evidence."[57] Turning the object of study into "a reflexive medium" rings true to many oral historians, who since the 1970s have "turned" their oral sources into a category of analysis.[58]

It is easy enough for historians to understand that photographs, just like other pictures, are not self-evident, do not speak for themselves, and need to be understood not as objective depictions of past reality but rather as artifacts produced by people with interests and agendas at a certain time and place, artifacts that are shaped as much by aesthetic conventions as by social norms. Yet, historians—not trained in the use of images—find it difficult to put this realization into practice. Oral historians in particular find themselves in an ironic situation. They have traditionally battled prejudice against oral sources as "subjective," fraught with problems of memory (i.e., recall), and thus unreliable. In using photographs, oral historians must now battle the popular assumption that photographs are objective because "the camera never lies."[59]

The authors in this collection offer a path out of the dead-end street of the objectivity-subjectivity dichotomy. They explore the photograph in the context of the oral history interview as a reflexive medium—photographs and oral narratives playing on each other during the interview construct rather than simply reveal, recover, or retell the past. Our contributors begin with the proposition that photographs, just like the memories evoked in oral narratives, are not timeless and fixed in their meanings. Although they draw on a variety of theories

coming out of photography criticism, our authors base their arguments on the empirical case studies at hand. While an extensive review of photo theory is not necessary here because the authors explain the concepts they use, Annette Kuhn and Kirsten Emiko McAllister's classification of this theory may be a useful guide to some of the fundamental questions asked in the wake of the photographic turn.

Photography theory has drawn on "three strands of analysis," according to Kuhn and McAllister. The first, following Foucault and postcolonial theory, asks how photography is implicated both "in the production of modern knowledge, where sight operates as the foundation of a system of classification and control" and in the production of "colonial knowledge structured by the desire and the gaze of the coloniser." The second, based on feminist theory and Holocaust Studies, investigates how scholars, "in the process of analysing the discourses deployed through photography," are invested "in the images they study." The third "draws on earlier phenomenological studies of photography by Roland Barthes, Walter Benjamin and Siegfried Kracauer." This strand asks "how photography can become implicated in our knowing the world." Barthes's concept of the "punctum," for example, is used in several essays to get a grip on how photographs affect viewers emotionally. Freund and Thiessen use punctum to indicate the jarring effect on the historian of the gap between a happy image and its horrid story, while Tinkler uses it to indicate how a photograph triggers an emotional response. Ryan understands punctum as an "after-image" that lingers in memory even after the photograph is put away, and, like Freund and Thiessen, posits that punctum may be enriched or even generated by a story about a photograph that may otherwise be forgettable. More generally, photography critics "consider how meanings in photographs may be shifted, challenged and renewed over time and for different purposes, from historical inquiries to quests for personal, familial, postcolonial and national identities."[60]

The oral historians in this collection draw on all three strands of theory to investigate not only photographs' past meanings but also the meanings developed and ascribed during the interview. Just as our narrators, in collaboration with oral historians, make sense of their lives through the stories they tell, they make sense of their lives by weaving stories around and inscribing meanings into photographs in the situation of the interview. These meanings, like the oral narratives, are constructed through language, emotions, and body movements. They are constructed dialogically and interactively—oral historians are implicated in the construction of the photographs' meanings as they, in turn, then use photographs for their own research goals.

Penny Tinkler and Alistair Thomson, for example, ask in their respective essays how photographs and photographic albums were implicated in producing knowledge about being a "modern" Briton in the post–World War II period, be it as teenage girls or overseas migrants. Oral history helps these authors understand