The most public of all history: family history and heritage albums in the transmission of records
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CHAPTER SEVEN

THE TRANSMISSION AND PLURALIZATION OF FAMILY MEMORIES

I can provide information concerning the Pecot family, which originated in Les Touches, a village in what is now the province of Loire-Atlantique, France, and ultimately arrived in Louisiana. I’ve researched the family for several years now; I have the information for the 1800s back ... would like to meet other Pecots, however, and find out where the family has scattered!

From a posting to Genealogy Forum

The New W[estern] A[ustralian] Maritime Museum highlights the maritime traditions and cultures, not just of Australia, but of all world nations involved in the history of this region. In 2002 Graeme Henderson, by then the Director of The New WA Maritime Museum, proudly hosted a celebratory symposium of the Stefano... There all delighted at the unveiling of the original votive painting, depicting Tuckey’s Jessie, and his boat being rowed towards the boys and their Aboriginal saviours on the shore at North West Cape. It had been escorted by Father Capuchin Nikola Novak, from the Church Our Lady of Mercy in Dubrovnik where it hung for well over a century in the Gallery of Capuchin Monastery—his presence and the picture a real highlight to those involved in modern Stefano story.

From an online article on the display of the barque Stefano

As other chapters have argued, the past is gathered and told in the practices of family history and album making through the transmission of records and oral accounts.

Yet, transmission is not a finite process. Rather, the activation of records (“interaction,

intervention, interrogation and interpretation‖) leads to other representations, sometimes to collective memory (and often new records), to “pluralization.” This chapter looks to this formation by offering two examples that show the movement of records traversing time and space in a dynamic “of departure and return, emerging sameness and difference, repetition and recursion … distancing and differentiation.” In these examples, the chapter returns to a consideration of recordkeeping, which like memory itself is “social … elective … driven by various processes, both willful and unconscious … and provisional, always open to contestation, and often actually contested.” Suggested within the two excerpts above, the chapter also tells of various environments conducive to knowing private family histories, located continents apart from one another, now joined online, and thus becoming, more and more often, the most public of all history.

Movement and Layering

The public nature of history learned through family records can be placed within a “belief that history and historical-cultural memory matter in the way people go about their day-to-day lives.” In this respect, public history—as family history is—becomes an ideology that “promotes the collaborative study and practice of history” by people holding various positions (academic historians, museum curators, archivists, professional genealogists, serious hobbyists, and others). These people move traces of the past into the public realm, but their positions are layered (determined by their accreditation, their legitimacy in various circles) and their knowledge rests upon various standpoints.

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3 Ketelaar, “Archives as Spaces of Memory,” 12.
Accessibility to records, as discussed in Chapters Two and Three, adds to these differing perspectives, which become another part of the movements and layering. At the same time, learning in such an environment itself pluralizes, as shown in Chapters Five and Six, adding further movement and other layers. Overall, this is a vibrant process precisely because of the unknowns, the new meanings, the pursuit of clues and patterns always set within any interpretations of records.

Despite this dynamic nature of referrals back and forth between records and people, the “shifting layers” present sometimes ambiguous and opposing representations of the past. In this respect, the layers complicate the work of family historians since they see the processes of memory as progressing linearly. This propensity might even be one of the reasons so many family historians do not bring to fruition their plans for completed projects. Their rules, drawn from a positivist tradition, discourage dealing with inconclusive records, the layers of not-yet-revealed sources, and the problem always of missing stories. Similarly, album makers persist in their collage-like creations (themselves layers) of many truths and outsider status, but do not see their work as being worthy of an archives or library. Their albums are unlike a history textbook in that they are subjective, and unlike published autobiographies and biographies in that they are hybrid forms of texts and images. Thus, albums and family history move more often than not to a semi-public rather than a public realm.

The idea that the past holds backward and forward movements, layers, and at the same time the limits of a certain linear thinking also is found in most scholarly discourse that reaches family historians and album makers. As Laurel Thatcher Ulrich noted in her discussion of embroidered family trees, the creators of such artifacts saw a purpose in

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8 For a related argument, see Brien Brothman, “Archives, Life Cycles, and Death Wishes.”
their creations since here they could project “time stretching out beyond … a lifetime.”

This extension was predicated on learning to think about what has come before and what will come after one has died. She draws the analogy of finding a note left by a child in the wall of a house, a note that the child believes will be found one day. Here is a layer then also of time, (the future orientation of the child) as well as a literal construction (of a note, of a place within a wall, and a mind’s conception of the possibility of others tearing down the wall). Memory itself is always so constructed. The point for family historians and album makers is to find these layers that have moved forward in time, these records that have persisted. There is again vibrancy here since, as Hannah Arendt famously remarked, “To be alive means to live in a world that preceded one’s own arrival and will survive one’s departure.”

For archivists and others who study memory as well, vocabulary suggesting movement and layers, as noted in Chapter Two, abounds in the midst of a dependency at least on language suggesting a straightforward movement. As Brien Brothman has eloquently shown, the life cycle model especially neglects the fact that beginning- and end-points recur in record formation. Even in records continuum theory, there is “the reach” of public and private records. Frank Upward used this term to show knowledge and its circulation via publishing. Records similarly extend themselves via and towards groups of people to represent the past. People and technologies mediate places and

10 Schudson, Watergate in American Memory, 219, 221.
12 Brothman, “Archives, Life Cycles, and Death Wishes,” especially 244–266.
objects that allow some remembering in common. All the while, a certain layering of the past obscures records and requires different, less linear approaches to understanding family history. The two examples that follow here show something of these less linear circumstances.

A Succession of Knowing

To say today the word *Acadian* one chooses between multiple understandings of early French colonial residents of what are now the Maritime Provinces of Canada, their descendants still there and elsewhere, especially the residents of the southern Louisiana parishes where many of these French-speaking Canadians (now often called “Cajuns”) settled after the 1750s. These three meanings circle around the activities of many family historians and album makers today, conveying especially distinctive food, music, language, accents, and names, as well as interest in particular records.

One place this living collective memory is self-consciously located is the Acadian World Congress, or *Le Congrès Mondial Acadien*, which has met every five years since 1994. Serving as perhaps the world’s biggest bilingual family reunion, the Congress presents the chance to meet cousins, learn the landscape of varied Acadian homelands, and memorialize *le grand dérangement* (as the Louisianians call the expulsion of the Acadians from Canada by the British in the years 1755 to 1762). These meetings have converted many a non-practitioner to family history.

The establishment of this congress coincided with other ethnic revivals in North America at the end of the twentieth century. Such revivals await usually at least four

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generations, a period when men and women are “sufficiently secure about their American identity.”\textsuperscript{15} But the late twentieth century’s emphasis on social history and various efforts to attract attention to heritage in popular culture added much to this particular type of interest in the past, extending the interest far beyond the fourth generation theory.

Two cousins tell of their own Acadian awakening and reckoning with what \textit{can} be known within family history. One is an artist named Mary Anne DeBoisblanc (b. 1925) who uses genealogy to find subjects for many of her paintings. The other is her cousin, Carolyn Ivy Shimek (b. 1934), who traces ancestral lives through records, creating in turn source notes and family trees that plot the family’s trajectory of migrations from France, to Acadie, to various intermittent stops, and finally to Louisiana.\textsuperscript{16}

For those interested in the transmission of memory, the works of Mary Anne, Carolyn, and others in their family reveal insights into how different parts of the past are told at different periods, and how choices of kinship and stories themselves shift over time. These choices are not unlike the pattern mentioned in Chapter Two, of finding a particular “crossing ancestor,” who migrated to the U.S. and can tell us something about how “we become Americans.” Often this is a story “of hardship ... but it is also a source of pride ... the start of a kind of spiritual pedigree.”\textsuperscript{17} It can also be much more than that—it can bring insight into the complexity of history, memory, and records at the same time.

One of Mary Anne and Carolyn’s chosen ancestors is a woman named Marie Rosalie Préjean (1741–1813) (later Pécot) whose life as a teenager (and for many years

\textsuperscript{15} Kammen, “Some Patterns and Meanings of Memory Distortion,” 333.
\textsuperscript{16} Because of the public nature of the work of Mary Anne DeBoisblanc and the Miho Baccich story, the names here are real ones.
\textsuperscript{17} Seabrooke, “A Reporter at Large,” 60.
after) was disrupted by the British deportation of the French from Acadie (now Canada). Marie Rosalie, her younger sister, four brothers, and their mother were put on one ship; two older sisters and their husbands were put on another ship. Some forty-five years later, the sisters were reunited, but not before a succession of moves in North America and the Caribbean.

*Marie Rosalie’s Story and Records about Her*

There is a series of stories, as well. One account, as Carolyn and Mary Anne tell it in the early twenty-first century, begins with Marie Rosalie and some of the family being sent to an unknown part of New England or Pennsylvania in the 1750s. This, their first home after exile, can only be guessed through the baptismal record of Marie Rosalie’s first son at two years of age in Saint Domingue (now Haiti), their second home in exile. The record, found by Carolyn in a published listing of Acadian records, is written in the style of genealogical transcriptions discussed in Chapter Five: DUPUY, JN. BAPTISTE, BORN IN NEW ENGLAND (CHARLES & ROSALIE PREJEAN, ACADIENS) BAPTIZED 27 OCT 1764.\(^\text{18}\)

Family lore tells that Marie Rosalie married in either Massachusetts or Philadelphia and also had another child, a daughter Rose, but no record exists about her birth or death. A family story, some vague mention of “Santo Domingo” (Saint Domingue) had led Mary Anne first to want to know why Marie Rosalie was there. Mary Anne and Carolyn learn that their ancestors were part of a group given one-way paid passage, courtesy of the French military, to help build fortifications on the island. Between January 1764 and January 1765, thousands of Acadians were shipped to Môle St. Nicolas as indentured workers. Many died of tropical diseases and malnutrition while

clearing the jungle\textsuperscript{19}—showing the cousins in 2009 at once the fragility of life, the ever-present threat of authoritarian power, and more contextual documentation.

Through friends of a friend in Haiti and France today, Mary Anne learns of death certificates for Marie Rosalie’s husband, mother, and four brothers. The next records show that in January 1768, the widow “Rosalie,” then 27 years old, married a 37 year-old French widower, François Pécot, a native of France. This marriage would produce nine children (seven of whom grew to adulthood),\textsuperscript{20} and provide more publicly-available records and oral accounts that allowed another cousin to write of the family’s time in Saint Domingue.

This cousin, Thomas Frère Kramer, interviews older family members and writes a small book about the family published in 2002. Through this book, Mary Anne and Carolyn learn that Marie Rosalie, at the time of the 1790s slave revolt in her second home of exile (Saint Domingue), lived right between two fighting camps, one of the runaway slaves in the mountains and the other of rebels across the Spanish border. The little enclave of the Pécots fell to the slave army led by Toussaint L’Ouverture in January 1794. François Pécot and son Louis François were beheaded. With the help of a slave named Scapin, the rest of the family escaped to Port-au-Prince where the British evacuated them to Jamaica. Scapin accompanied them to this island, where they lived for five years, until the British forced them out again, for fear the French slaves “might inflame the indigenous slave population. Gabriel Bouillet, son-in-law of Rosalie … then arranged passage, and they sailed for New Orleans and eventually [settled in] St. Mary


\textsuperscript{20}Bethany Ewald Bultman and Mary Anne DeBoisblanc, \textit{A String of Pearls—The Lustrous Lives of Acadian Women}, exhibition catalog (St. Martinville, LA: Acadian Memorial Foundation, 2007), 12.
Parish [a Louisiana county].” Scapin and other slaves also came with the Acadian family to Louisiana.21

Before Mary Anne began her work on family history, she knew none of this story. Her parents and grandparents stressed the settlement of Louisiana, not the hardships of *le grand dérangement*. In archival terms, transmission and pluralization can be seen as evolving processes, requiring the amassing of records from a multiplicity of places. The memories of Marie Rosalie’s life, as far as can be told, were not discussed in the family before the late nineteenth century. Narratives, it is said, “simplify.” The presence of a beginning, middle, end, or an “original state of equilibrium, a disruption, and a resolution” make the past both tenable and interesting.22 But in genealogy this simplification can take decades, awaiting the time until the story is “needed” (thus attending to identity) and the time when records can be gathered (thus attending to evidence). For the broader Pecot family (who by the end of the nineteenth century also change the spelling of their name to reflect their American citizenship), a story from the years 1750–1815 has been told in increments over now more than two centuries.

Carolyn too did not know the story of her ancestor until she began family history work in June 1976. This was after her children were grown, “before *Roots*” in her memory. Her father was sick and she wanted a project that would interest him. However, she also associates her own research to the 1976 novel “because the 1977 televised version of this saga brought more and more people, and more and more funding” to a field that had long been under-appreciated. She connects then the enhancement of repository budgets as well as popular interest in genealogy to her own finding of records.

Mary Anne also began family history work when both her family life and public attention to the past were aligned. In the 1960s, *National Geographic Magazine* published an article on Acadian life in Louisiana. One of her children was very sick at the time, and sitting in waiting rooms in the National Institute for Health in Bethesda, Maryland, she painted the scenes that she knew from childhood to go alongside what she read in the national magazine, to “add to it.” She didn’t have time for her art again until the early 1990s, until, with her surviving children grown, she attended a family reunion, or what she calls “a mini-reunion” to celebrate the birthday of “the oldest cousin.” This gathering “made” her “hear the story” of Marie Rosalie. “And I came home and said I have to make something about this. I began to paint her story.”

When queried more about the sequence of learning about Marie Rosalie, Carolyn begins with an oral account transcribed in the 1890s. Here again we have the framework of “four generations” needed to pass before a “revival of ethnic memory and culture” would normally arise. In addition, the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries placed increasing pressures on Acadian communities to become integrated into the English-speaking cultures in Louisiana. So, the timing of the 1890s’ account also can be seen as one of a determination to tell why these families wanted to retain their own histories and/or why they might not trust their stories within the collective memory of archives, libraries, or historians.

It was during this period that two granddaughters of Marie Rosalie (Hermina Bouillet Martel and Mathilda Perret) told of the family’s experience of *le grand dérangement*. Their accounts were translated into English and written down. One translator was Gabriel Sully, grandson of Hermina. Her son, J. Scully Martel, is
mentioned in a 1924 newspaper article reporting on the reunion of the sisters. He is called the “heroic custodian” of the story. He, rather than his mother, his great-grandmother, or his son, is the featured survivor since he “went to great lengths to track down the story of the four exiled sisters.” Also praised is Marie Rosalie’s son, “Charles Pecot, one of the French pioneers who settled on the Teche and who was descended from one of the four Prejean sisters.” Thus the focus shifts to the two grown men, away from their female storytellers. 23 This pattern of “voice and the appropriation of voice” can be read in many ways. As Robert Fisher found in tracing a 1783 account that was told within a family by women but brought to public hearing by local male historians,

Feminist scholars might read … a struggle of [women] to make their voices heard…. Historians of a contrary bent could argue that these members of the masculine elite recognized the value and ensured the survival of their feminine voices. Still others might see it as proof that the bonds of family are stronger than those of gender, class or time. 24

The 1890s’ account, as far as can be known from the 1924 newspaper clipping, emphasizes the reunion of the four sisters. To learn more, Mary Anne had friends contact genealogists in Canada, Haiti, and France. From these contacts, she learns simple dates to give to the period of exile in Saint Domingue, and learns for the first time, of the time spent in Jamaica. These details move her: it is the “overwhelming” nature of the account that has tremendous power (families separated, maltreatment in exile, struggles to make a better life in Saint Domingue, then revolution, the beheading of a husband and a son, further exile, in total four dangerous boat trips with uncertain destinations, and yet

reunion and long life for Marie Rosalie, the establishment of a family that continues. It is a very moving story indeed and the placement of it within an academic account is not easy. It is not unlike anthropologist Mark Auslander finds in other family history: A desire for unity and connections in the face of great change bolsters present goals and rituals of family life. But it is also more, mainly because the dispersement of people, records, and stories reveals how rare and precious survival of traces of the past are, how close they come to being forgotten. The union of the people, records, stories in the lives of Mary Anne and Carolyn signifies continuity and change but also gratitude to those people who in the midst of such turmoil left traces of their lives. The story itself is a diaspora of meanings. In four exhibitions, Marie Rosalie becomes the focal point of Mary Anne’s art work. The 2009 exhibition is even called “Le Triomphe de Marie Rosalie.”

Mary Anne discusses her own life, the severe genetic illness of one of her sons, the early and unexpected death of her husband and another son, and then refers to Marie Rosalie and her perseverance.

As asked about why Marie Rosalie’s story became known, Carolyn speaks of a different sort of perseverance, of herself and others with records. She credits being able to find ancestors to the work of those who have transcribed documents. In a 2004 email to cousins working on family history, Carolyn writes about her mother’s ancestors:

It was so easy to research her lines as there is a Rev. Hébert who has abstracted all of the church and courthouse records in about 40 volumes. These are at the Clayton Genealogy Library and all I had to do was follow them back in time from my mother who is listed in the last volume (1909). They took me back to 1754.

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25 Auslander, “Something We Need to Get Back To.”
26 Carolyn Shimek, email to Bethany Bultman and others, August 21, 2004, Bethany Bultman Collection, Newcomb Archives, Tulane University, New Orleans, LA.
She also remarks on “how lucky” she has been to live near this particular library, the Clayton Library for Genealogical Research, “one of the top ten in the country.” This collection attracts many out-of-town visitors, and their librarians and archivists become part of the almost celebrity-like culture within the world of genealogy.27 In such a library, Carolyn could draw from late nineteenth-century biographical directories and local histories28 and the long and continuing transcription and publication efforts of genealogists,29 discussed in Chapter Five.

Carolyn maintains files that show traces not just of ancestors but also of these collecting institutions and the people within them. Asking her about the Jamaican period of exile for Marie Rosalie and the family who had escaped Saint Domingue, she sends information about “22 hand-calligraphed, 11 x 17 pages, now loose and laminated, formerly bound—probably from the early 20th century.” Microfilmed, these records make up part of the Kingston, Jamaica Catholic Church Registers project, work coordinated by archivists in Jamaica and New Orleans. The records contain a rich source for those whose ancestors came from or were exiled in Jamaica: “Baptisms 1817–1826, Marriages 1800–1819, Baptisms (of slaves and free people of color) 1804–1834 … (the names of the godparents and the names of the owners of the slave being baptized).”30

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30 Announcement from New Orleans Public Library, Louisiana Division, 2000, personal files, Carolyn Ivy Shimek.
As to why the family did not discuss the story of Marie Rosalie’s life beyond some vague mention of the reunion of the sisters, Carolyn believes “they were too busy living.” Besides, “family history was talk then, generally. And would they have talked of this around children?” One can also ask if the ousting of the Acadians by the British, the poor treatment of the Acadians throughout North America, the failure of the French to aid the Acadians in so many places, the poor welcome in Jamaica, and even the governing of Louisiana as an English-speaking state—if, for all these reasons, Marie Rosalie and her descendants had reasons to remain quiet? Collective memory, for whatever reason, emphasized settlement, and did not tell of Marie Rosalie’s long horrendous journey.

Overall the history of this Acadian woman’s story can be listed as continuing within the family’s three or four generations after her arrival in Louisiana when it is dictated in French, translated and written in English, moving from a private account kept in the family to others in the local area. 31 Five generations after the arrival, it is interpreted again this time with a public presentation in a newspaper article that emphasizes “romance” not of male to female love, but of the beauty of Louisiana, the joyful reunion, set within a frame praising the male members of the family as settlers of the region, and as tellers of the family story. 32 Six and seven generations after arrival, the story becomes a part of a larger story about hardship and survival—especially about Marie Rosalie and the women of the family—as interpreted with records in genealogical files, and with imagination in paintings. 33

32 Frost, “Strange Romance of 4 Sisters.”
33 Bethany Ewald Bultman and Mary Anne DeBoisblanc, The Spirit of Acadian Women, exhibition guide (St. Martinville, LA: Acadian Memorial Foundation, 2005); Bultman and DeBoisblanc, A String of Pearls. Other exhibits were at the Louisiana State Old Courthouse Museum, Natchitoches, LA (2008); Newcomb Archives, Tulane University, New Orleans, LA (2009).
Linking the Family to Collective Memory

Despite this slow revelation of their family history, Mary Anne and Carolyn both recall other aspects of family history in their early lives. They remember family gatherings, portraits, photographs, and graveyards. They also both speak of the statue of the literary heroine Evangeline in St. Martinville, Louisiana. In her exhibition catalog Mary Anne writes:

Ever since childhood, Evangeline has had a mystical hold on me as an Acadian woman…. It was Evangeline’s spirit that guided me to the Acadian Memorial…. It was here, I realized that Marie Rosalie’s story belonged. Then my Pecot cousin [and here she is referring to Carolyn] told me Marie Rosalie was actually buried on February 11, 1813 at St. Martin de Tours. 34

St. Martin de Tours is the church near the Acadian Memorial, where Mary Anne had an exhibition of paintings in 2005 and 2007.

The 1847 poem by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, upon which the statue’s name is based, follows an Acadian young woman he named Evangeline in her search for her lost love, Gabriel. The two have been parted from one another (much as the sisters were) during le grand dérangement. Longfellow based his story on a second-hand account told by a Massachusetts Episcopal priest. To learn the landscape of Louisiana, the poet relied upon his sister’s telling of a journey to New Orleans and a panorama called “Three-Mile Painting,” a moving screen that allowed viewers to sit in Boston and experience what a journey down the Mississippi River would be like. 35 He also visited libraries and read T. C. Halliburton’s Historical and Statistical Account of Nova Scotia (1829) and Guillaume-

34 Bultmann and DeBoisblanc, A String of Pearls, 1.
Thomas-François Raynal’s account of the expulsion published in 1770. This research shows the trail of sources (transmission and pluralization) that were available and acceptable to Longfellow. It is notable that he did not rely upon genealogical records, though one scholar at least speculates on his use of the Massachusetts Historical Society.

Longfellow’s poem was an immediate and continuing success. This popularity rested on both the poignant story and the singsong of the poet’s dactylic hexameter. Reminiscent of Greek and Latin classics, but at the same time different (since classicists long held that verse in hexameter was not suited to English), the rhythm added another tier of cultural import. Generations of American schoolchildren have memorized the poem, knowing nothing of these various layers of research or American adaptations to the style or the story.

Besides its poignancy and catchy meter, Longfellow’s poem became popular because there was so little actually known about the expulsion of the French from Acadie. Among Acadians themselves, Evangeline was seen as a positive role model, one of the only Acadians revered within mainstream English-speaking American and Canadian cultures. Yet, in discussion of public and private memory, it should be acknowledged that Longfellow’s poem left out the role of New England militiamen in the burning of Acadian farms during the expulsion. On the other side of the poem’s critics were, of course, those who attacked the poem as too sympathetic to the Acadians, stating

that Longfellow had painted in “too soft colors the rude robustness … of the peasants of
Grand Pré.” Nevertheless, these arguments were not widely heard in Louisiana. While
there are other stories of Acadians parted and then reunited from one another to which the
Louisianians have looked, none proved so compelling as the Longfellow poem. The
poem is still a reference point for Mary Anne and Carolyn.

Symbolically, Mary Anne “adds” Evangeline as part of her own family. In
exhibits and catalogs, a photograph of the statue and a drawing of Longfellow are always
near her own Acadian family images. Evangeline is the most obvious aspect of the
recontextualization of the story of her ancestors, part of the “bigger picture,” her cousin
the genealogist says.

The origin of the statue is itself representative of how specific memory texts cross
between public and private realms. It was sculpted during the making of the 1929 film
Evangeline produced by the Edwin Carewe Company of Hollywood. (An earlier 1913
film was made in Canada; and there are, of course, many songs about Evangeline, as
well.) The famous actress Dolores Del Rio, who played the role of Evangeline, was so
impressed by the story that she offered to pay for a monument to honor the heroine. The
statue was fashioned in the actress’ likeness and immediately became a tourist attraction.
The unveiling was attended by some 15,000 people, including a group of Acadians from
Canada.  

40 Brasseux, In Search of Evangeline, 14–16; LeBlanc, “The Dynamic Relationship,” 110–115; Sidonie de
la Houssaye, Pouponne et Balthazair: Nouvelle Acadienne (New Orleans: Librairie de l’Opinion, 1888); Felix Voorhies,
Acadian Reminiscences: With the True Story of Evangeline (New Iberia, LA: F. J.
Dauterive, 1907).
41 Ted Fitzgerald, “Evangeline Mourns in Louisiana,” Western Catholic Reporter, October 29, 2003,
Evangeline—the exiled and patient woman, the statue, the song, the poem itself and its popularity—functions as a gendered history within the larger international history. Evangeline, for Mary Anne and Carolyn, moves between public and private memories.

Finally, the Marie Rosalie story also goes outside the family via a genealogical research group, the St. Domingue Special Interest Group active in New Orleans. From this group, sociologist Angel Adams Parham learns of Mary Anne’s paintings. Parham studies both this mainly European American family history group and another one made up primarily of Creoles of Color, called LA Creole.42 As part of her study of race and the intersections of private histories with public accounts, Parham is especially interested in Mary Anne’s interpretation of her ancestors’ time in Saint Domingue. Next to a painting of Toussaint L’Ouverture, Mary Anne has written in both the catalog and on the exhibition label:

I wish I could tell General Toussaint that I forgive him for taking the lives of my ancestors in Sté. Domingue during the revolution. I understand that he was a product of his time. In the Pécot name, I would also ask his forgiveness for the Pécot’s ownership of slaves. They, too, were products of their time. I pray that all of our souls will rest in peace.43

As Parham comments, “Mary Anne is attempting to use her family history research as a site of reflection and public social commentary.” Although “rare within the family history networks” studied by Parham (and in this present study), Mary Anne’s remarks can be seen as a “first step toward cross-racial dialogue concerning contentious social issues from the past.” Parham also notes that attending the opening speeches at one of Mary Anne’s exhibits was the first time she had ever heard the forced migrations of

Acadians likened to the forced enslavement and removal of Africans from Africa. But, as we have seen in Chapter Five, at least some family historians do know of these and other expulsions, thus of private histories informing collective memory especially about migration. Marie Rosalie’s account then continues to be told in successive steps. See Figure 1 in which the divisions of public and private memory texts as told by men and women are shown.

44 Parham, “Race, Memory and Family History,” 19–24.
45 With the assistance of Ellen Bull and Britt Blevins in computer graphics, I designed Figures 1–3 to show movements and layers.
Always Remembered

Increasingly, technology has made knowing many varied interpretations about ancestors possible, and possible more quickly as well. Communities of cousins extend across time and space to inform one another about existing records: recall how Michele Lapointe-Lehmann found her Audet-Lapointe Family in Chapter Five, and how Alexandre Péicot, perhaps a cousin of Mary Anne and Carolyn, whose posting began this chapter, seeks his cousins who left France. Consider yet another account of one family and many different voices, spread over time and space, but this one meant more deliberately to harness the imperative to remember. Jonathan Jordan (b. 1953) introduces what he calls “our family story” by noting that in 1990 his cousin Gustave “Gus” Rathe (b. 1921) published an account taken from a handwritten family manuscript describing his grandfather’s survival of a shipwreck in the late nineteenth century.46 Like the story of the ancestor of Mary Anne and Carolyn, Gus’s grandfather and Jonathan’s great-grandfather, Miho Baccich, had a complicated and riveting “crossing” story involving European power and a new home in North America. The differences in the trajectories of the accounts (Marie Rosalie’s to Miho’s) have to do with a chosen (rather than a forced) migration, with education, with preservation of memory texts of various sorts, with a later time period, and with a wider geographic area. The differences have to do with social and economic circumstances, as well as technologies that allow greater chances of passage of records within the building of collective memory. The differences have to do, too, with

46 As in the previous example, showing the public nature of this family’s story, the actual names have been used. Gustave Rathe, The Wreck of the Barque Stefano Off the North West Cape of Australia in 1875 (Edinburgh, UK: Cannongate Press, 1992); Gustave Rathe, The Wreck of the Barque Stefano Off the North West Cape of Australia in 1875 (Victoria Park, Australia: Hesperian Press, 1990). The Australian and the Scottish editions of the book are slightly different with the Scottish account giving more information on sources.
the seminal events: The Baccich story does not have the moments of “black distress”\textsuperscript{47} that the Acadian one does.

The account told in numerous interviews with four people from the Baccich family begins when Miho, just a teenager, leaves his home in Croatia in the 1870s as a worker aboard his uncle’s barque, the “Stefano,” bound for England to take coal to Hong Kong. Off the western coast of Australia, the ship runs aground and only Miho and another teenager survive. After near starvation, cannibalism of the dead sailors, and treks through the hot desert, they are helped by aborigines. Eventually, the boys meet the captain of a pearling ship who secures their passage back to Europe. At home, Miho and the other survivor tell their story to a Jesuit scholar who writes down the experiences of the shipwreck, the long journey of survival, the flora and fauna of the land, the saving of the boys by aborigines, and the assistance of colonial white Australians. Two copies of the manuscript are made.

Jonathan’s mother, Peggy Jordan (b. 1926) today remembers being told that Miho’s parents thought it wise that their son and the other survivor tell their story to a “Jesuit priest.” The family today guesses that the presence of an authority (a Jesuit) was crucial: Cannibalism even among starving boys was of concern.

Peggy also tells of, and shows a print from, a votive painting, circa 1877, still hanging in a church in Dubrovnik, also commissioned in gratitude for the survival of the boys. This other dedicated memory form is inscribed with names and dates (i.e., the name of the ship and its captain, the dates of the shipwreck, the rescue, and place of rescue by the pearling ship). In the painting, the Virgin Mary and Child overlook the procession of aborigines on the beach seeing the boys begin their journey home. In the tradition of such

\textsuperscript{47} LeBlanc, “The Dynamic Relationship,” 90.
offerings, the artist inscribes the words “terrible sufferings” and adds the length of the boys’ stay in Australia. A solemn promise is offered in gratitude for their survival. Family members from the U.S., who have traveled to Croatia specifically to see it, describe the painting as “surprisingly small but moving.”

_Dedicated Memory_

The manuscript and the painting are also known to others in the large family and others outside the family. Miho’s story is told about in a book published for a limited number of readers, a documentary film, and an extended conversation among his descendants, descendants of the aborigines who see the book as proof of their ownership of land in the 1870s, and descendants of the pearling ship captain, as well as others who tell the story in various ways. Australian-Croatian scholar and filmmaker Josko Petkovic, for example, has written of issues of authorship in the manuscript. Petkovic believes that young Miho wrote most of the manuscript. What is most interesting about Petkovic’s conclusions is that he too tells of the intervention of the parents, their need to make a record: Canon Srkurla “was commissioned by Miho’s parents” to tell their son’s story.

But the story can also seen as beginning with the type of society in which Miho lived. Seafaring families then, as now, understood the possibility of death at sea, the need to keep records of goods and people, and the names of seamen. They also understood thankfulness for survival, the recompense, and the hedge against loss inscribed in such paintings and in such accounts. The church in Dubrovnik is filled with such offerings to

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48 A photograph of the painting appears in both editions of Rathe, _The Wreck of the Barque Stefano_ within a middle section of the book with other images (on unnumbered pages).


memory and gratitude, according to Meg Jordan Bradley (b. 1949) who visited there in the 1980s.

After his return, Miho attended seaman’s school, and soon his uncle gave the young man command of his own ship, called the “Resurrection.” This name was appropriate for his survival, for his continuing crossing of oceans. The name also could be seen to stand symbolically for what Simon Titley-Baynes called the “resurrective functions of genealogy.”

Family stories tell how Miho, as the captain of the Resurrection, made his way to New Orleans. Here he decided to remain. Family stories suggest that he made that one trip to prove to himself that the sea was not his favored place of employment. In New Orleans, he became involved instead in land, in real estate. His wife, his children, and his grandchildren documented these interests in other family records, notably in albums his granddaughters made. They also sought out public records about him.

The accounts of the family and the public records are extended today by the Internet, another agent of transmission. The excerpt at the beginning of the chapter tells of the Stefano now being a part of a museum in Australia. Also, much of Petkovic’s work is online, and there are other interpretations of the meaning of Miho’s story. The Croatian Chronicle, a Croatian-American newspaper, features the story of Miho in an article entitled, “Croats in Louisiana and Mississippi: A Century Long Story.” This article by John Peter Kralijc tells the same story that the family and Gus’s book tell. However, Kralijc emphasizes the settlement of New Orleans by Croatians:

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Baccich was surprised by New Orleans. “How ironic that in my first glimpse of America, where I expected to find Americans or men of English origin, I found a very European city with a variety of Europeans. During the next week, I was to discover many attractive features of this exciting place. First, it was so large and dynamic—over 200,000 residents! The Croatian colony was also large, nearly a thousand people, and [I was] introduced to many of them. A large number were already owners of their own small businesses, retail stores, restaurants and oyster fisheries (a favorite business among Dalmatians).” Baccich said that for four days he socialized “with the local Croatians and I saw a camaraderie that I had never known before.” He made up his mind: Baccich stayed in New Orleans, married a local Croatian woman and became a successful businessman. His efforts were rewarded by the naming of a city street after him in the city (the street runs parallel to the Inner Harbor Navigation Channel).53

The street name, “Baccich Street,” inscribes the story upon the geography of the city of New Orleans, a detail of importance to keeping the whole of the story alive. These are also layers within the evolving account concerning Miho, his shipwreck, his telling of the account to a Jesuit scholar who inscribed it, his voyage and settlement in New Orleans, and his family’s continuing reinterpretation of the story and their living memories.

Ordered chronologically, the Baccich archives dates from 1876, the first letter Miho writes to tell of his survival to the annotation of the account by some descendants of the language group that rescued him. There are approximately thirteen artifacts and five examples of living memory shown on Figure 2.

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Figure 2

- Artifact
- Book
- Carbon Copy
- Email
- Interview
- Language group
- Letter
- Living Memory
- Manuscript
- Name
- Notebook
- Online
- Painting
- Photocopy
- Video
Figure 3 with blue typescript marking the private records and green marking public records.

Ordered in terms of public versus private records, the archives can be seen as follows in

Figure 3 with blue typescript marking the private records and green marking public

archives.
The Barque Stefano, which was captained by Vlaho Milosavich, was wrecked in 1875 near Point Clotes in Australia. Ivan Jurich and Miho Baccich survive.

Miho writes a letter of his survival on May 16, 1876 from Australia to his parents.

Original is in Maritime Museum of Dubrovnik in handwritten form.

From 1880s to 1910s, Miho sends to and receives letters from Captain Tuckey of the pearling ship.

1990, Gustave Rathe writes an account of his grandfather, Miho “Michael” Baccich and the shipwreck. It’s called The Wreck of the Barque Stefano.

November 1998, Gustave Rathe and son Paul travel to Fremantle to visit relics retrieved from the boat.

1880 Miho relocates from Dubrovnik to New Orleans and takes the manuscript with him.

Rathe’s book printed in Australia and Scotland.

The manuscript is translated into English in 1923.

Letters, e-mails, and artifacts are exchanged between aboriginal descendants of Tuckey and Miho Baccich, 1990s and early 2000s.

2000: Josko Petkovic, an academic film maker seeks interviews with descendants of Stefano sailors. He tracks down all primary descendants of the Stefano story. He also makes a photocopy of the manuscript held in the Rijeka Maritime Museum.


An Italian account of the shipwreck is written in 1877 by Canon Stefano Skaurin and entitled “I Naufrighi del Bark Austro-Ungarico Stefano alla Costa Nord-Ovest dell’Australia.” Two copies are made. One stays with Miho, the other is ultimately placed in the Maritime Museum in Croatia.

The Stefano’s ship bell was created in 1876.

Bell was found in 1997 and given to the Western Australian Maritime Museum in Fremantle, Australia.

Early 2000s, the aborigine tribes discuss using the manuscript as proof of continual habitation on the land since 1870s in order to keep various state rights.

A votive painting is commissioned by Baccich’s family to celebrate the two survivors. It is placed in the Church of Our Lady of Mercy in Dubrovnik, Croatia.

Painting travels to Australia in early 2000 for a celebration and then returns to the church.

The categories are not fixed. The letter of 1876 can shift to a public record if it, like the manuscript, is placed in a cultural repository.
The family and others have spread these various texts literally and figuratively among various people, repositories, and across three continents. Some of the records and stages of knowing were completely unknown to Peggy, Jonathan, and others in the family. Some of the records still exist in their original form within the family, within archives, within museums, within churches, and within other families. The “collection” of the memory is reshaped each generation, but it is ordered in relation to the story of Miho—his shipwreck, survival, passage to New Orleans—and more, the near continual memory of these three seminal events by himself and others.

What the family members “possess” (since, like other family historians and album makers, they assume the copies and the oral accounts make the overall collection “their own”) is a mnemonic framework: a history of transmission, a pattern of passing on the story. The public “reach” is made wider by the story in the book, the bell in the museum, the street name in New Orleans. In private they own—either symbolically or physically—the stories told, the handwritten accounts duplicated for one another, and the continuing letters between themselves and far-flung “others” attached to the family through Miho in Croatia, Australia, and the U.S.

Gus’s book indirectly describes how he found records and thus expanded the translation of his grandmother. Translation, Bruno Latour reminds us, is not just about the shift from one language to another, but about “displacement, drift, invention, mediation, the creation of a link that did not exist before and to some degree modifies two elements or agents.”54 In his introduction, in votive fashion similar to all introductions—but striking here because of the reader’s knowledge of the votive painting, Rathe names various people and events enabling this greater reach of the manuscript’s account. For

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example, he thanks the great-grandson of the captain of the pearling ship who rescued his grandfather. How does he find him? Through letters sent asking for help via a “new found friend” in Tasmania: an advertisement was placed in Perth newspapers.

This led to my meeting John Honniball of Perth, the captain’s great-grandson, a Fellow of the Royal Western Australian Historical Society, and the author of a published family history [emphasis made for this study] that included an account of the wreck of the Stefano based on early newspaper accounts.

He also thanks others in various cultural institutions in Washington, D.C., Australia, and Croatia.55

Gus’s acknowledgements demonstrate not only the path to the story itself, but also some of the gathering of records (ship records, church records, city directories, manuscripts, paintings) and their retention in families and institutions. His gratitude to these records and record holders also reminds us that his family expects memorialization and expects to find records. They inherited the Dubrovnik expectation of public inscription of memories.

New Orleans, too, held circumstances that enabled transmission and pluralization. Miho’s wife Angelina Cietcovich spoke five languages, since, though born in New Orleans, she came from a Dalmatian family, who in their native land had spoken both Croatian and Italian. New Orleans had German- and French-speaking schools, and her family thought that speaking these languages would help them advance socially and financially. She also, of course, learned English, since the city was an American one, after all. In the diplomatic sense, transmission depends on translation and publication, and this family had both nearby.

In the accounts of the family, Angelina is referred to as a scholar, a new role for women of her time. The grandchildren and great-grandchildren’s pride in this achievement, so many generations later, is noticeable. Angelina’s translation of the Italian manuscript written by the Jesuit priest and brought to America by her husband allowed her children and grandchildren to read and to hear the account. She wrote in a simple notebook, that later, a daughter who was skilled at bookbinding, bound in dark green leather (a very stiff, substantial cover, just like a commercial book). On the front in the upper third is imprinted (embossed? into the leather) a shield with three seahorses, behind which are the wavy lines of the sea. Above that is the title, again embossed.  

Each of the seven children was given a copy of the translation, typed by another daughter. From his mother (the oldest daughter), Gus inherited both Angelina’s transcription, now bound, and a typed carbon copy.

All through this trajectory of the story of Miho, records would not be possible without technology: writing technologies (of the Italian Jesuit), of the artist of the votive painting, of Angelina’s pencil and her notebooks, and of the simple requirements of letter writing and postal services, the printing press, and the computer. Today technology makes communication and transmission all the more rapid, allowing, for example, quick access to the *Croatian Chronicle*, and Petkovic’s scholarly debate on Angelina’s intentions, set within his translation. Within this latter work, Petkovic layers the translations, the collective memories with the earlier versions, and tells the reader how he does this.

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56 Leslie Crowell Rathe, email to author, April 16, 2009. The bookbinder was Eunice Baccich; some of her other work is available in the Newcomb Archives.
Meanwhile, family history is lived in New Orleans through Miho’s and Angelina’s examples in other ways. Peggy and her children cast present activities of the family, especially the making of family albums, within this larger account of Miho. The albums they show are called “Baccich and Lemarie families, 1870–1940,” and “The Lemarie, Swigart, and Jordan Album, 1940 to 2003.” Both albums bear this subtitle: “from original pictures saved, printed and edited by Betty Lemarie.” (Betty, now deceased, was Peggy’s sister.) Made with the help of one of Peggy’s daughters, the albums are huge (3 inches in depth) loose-leaf binders with photocopied pages, very like the albums popularized as family memory books by Marielen Christensen in Utah and discussed in Chapter Three. Each binder was duplicated so as to be given as gifts to each family member who requested one, thus extending transmission.

Peggy discusses the names of the albums as she turns their pages. The Croatian name, she says, can be traced to the 1650s as being Becetic, Bacic, Bassich. The other names also hold living memory that must be told to outsiders. The Alsatian “Lemarie”—pronounced Lemarié but written without the accent since the early 1900s, the German “Swigart,” and the English “Jordan” transmit another kind of living and archival memory, one kind of recontextualization, and a very vivid form of a pluralized society that is yet restricted by sound, by alphabetic symbols recognizable to particular communities. Though family historians and album makers tend most to discuss forenames as specific marks of transmission, the study of all names (onomastics) is never far from their thinking. As Darrett B. Rutman and Anita H. Rutman note in their study of child-naming patterns in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Virginia, names reveal much about those who choose them and “the culture that delimits the pool of names from which they
Peggy and others interested in family history understand this process. Here the transmission of memory is concerned with choices. “Grandfather chose the name so it would make sense to Americans,” she states. She does not comment on “Lemarie,” its spelling or its continued pronunciation, Lemarié. Such accommodations in New Orleans are so common as to go unspoken. They are one of the invisibles of collective memory but also of insider status. To live here is to know the pronunciation.

But one of the great-granddaughters, Mary Lee (b. 1945), also evokes the power of names in deciding life-changing decisions, and her “standing-in” for her grandfather:

I changed my [last] name to Baccich when I entered the seminary, to invoke the strong spirit of Miho. After doing so, I have gone to Australia twice and am rebuilding in New Orleans, the [part of the] city here [that] he and his partners built, the Gentilly Terrace area. I believe changing my name evoked all his genetic material within me and influenced my life to include his own history. Meeting with the Aborigines fulfilled a dream he had of returning to Australia and meeting with them again.

Similarly, the family albums hold other invisibles that must be elaborated upon by insiders if outsiders are to understand the context. This story and other family stories come to life through Peggy narrating her memories as she looks at the albums. Some of the images and words, transcribed, translated, and recontextualized by her sister and later, her daughter, Peggy recontextualizes again in showing them.

Memories of wartime; family births, weddings, and deaths; images and plans of family homes in general, alongside certificates and letters are interpreted as much or as little as she desires to tell. Comments appear in Betty’s albums and some are marked, “Peggy’s words” or “Peggy’s comments.” One especially moving example of this is a short paragraph “Peggy’s Comments Concerning Jenny” a child who died “one month

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short of her eighth birthday.” The sisters do not consider, or Peggy does not tell me if they consider, this memorialization as a legacy of the votive paintings of their great-grandparents, or the manuscript of survival their grandfather brought to America, but it is difficult not to see this connection. Life here is honored by inscription.

In “Sharing Memories,” Eric Ketelaar uses the term “collective memories,” as he says, “on purpose” to show the multiplicity of strands of memory. Literary critic James Young modifies the plurality of memory to show its intentionality, calling it “collected memory,” that is, representative of the sometimes conflicting accounts brought together in the common space of monuments and commemorations. In the Baccich family history, these varying modifications to collective memories and collected memory lead from and to a living memory, subject to changes as the story continues long after its original creators, captors, and organizers are gone.

Dynamic Memory

In a document-rich society, where the descendants of Marie Rosalie Préjean Pécot and Miho Baccich live, there are many reasons to argue that memory is both a living and an archival practice. Their memories are dependent on archivalization and recordkeeping practices, but neither the records nor the processes are static. The full story of Marie Rosalie, including more than just the Acadian expulsion and the reunion, awaited the late twentieth century and early twenty-first century because only then was there the technology to easily gather information, and the social framework that allowed

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58 Ketelaar, “Sharing,” 47.
60 As noted in Chapter One, this contradicts Nora’s position, who does not believe that memory, which is “first of all archival,” is also experienced from “within.” Nora, “General Introduction: Between Memory and History,” 6–8.
some interpretation of the various historic upheavals. Similarly, the great-grandchildren of Miho Baccich themselves are conscious of the movement of the story across various realms. Recalling the details of their Australian visits in 2006 and 2007, they comment on how “Papa” (as Miho was called even by great-grandchildren) “stayed in contact with the pearling ship captain, his children with the pearling ship captain’s children, and us, with the aborigines.” This succession was not only because of social customs but also because of technologies available to them. The great-grandchildren mention travel to remote parts of Australia being harsh. They went clandestinely, aided by permission to pass through a naval base where there would be water, but they could not have gone at all a century earlier.

They went also because society had changed enough that they could see Miho’s story as centrally involving people of other colors. An individual’s identity, Anthony Giddens notes, is located in the capacity to perpetuate a narrative. This narrative must join together disparate strands of the self into the story of the self. 61 What is shown in family history is the same, but the temporal and spatial distance is greater and requires movement, recasting, transmission, and ultimately to be tested, it also requires evidence, and it requires records. In family history, oral accounts, copies, translations, and other representations are more intimately and persistently dependent on continuing transmission. Transmission of this sort is therefore necessarily dynamic.

The album makers believe that their albums create, modify, or maintain relationships with other people. The family historians believe that their collections of

materials similarly add to a knowledge base, to the puzzle of the past (thus also creating, modifying, maintaining, or extinguishing various relationships). The whole of their processes are embedded within movement and thus in dynamic memory.

Their emphasis is foremost on a useful record, but for most of them this is defined in the present, though created for “generations to come.” They want, as a family historian introduced in Chapter Five, Catherine (b. 1959), notes, for future readers of their efforts to be able to see “the family dynamics, the patterns that have been repeated over and over and over. That at surface level you don’t see.”

For the family historians and album makers, the patterns and the surface levels are important. The interviewees and communities studied all worked to fit themselves and their findings into a particular history. They chose particular ancestors to track, particular events to understand, and/or particular artifacts to let stand symbolically for an event or life. They did so by using particular records to fit what they need in the present.

**The Hospitality of Memory, Ideas, and Nations**

Miho represented his memories of survival in Australia in yet one other representation that his descendants continue to articulate. A name—that most familiar and living form of a genealogical legacy—was given to one of his children to convey the way he wanted the story remembered. This was his second child, a daughter born on the 27th of October, 1890, the fifteenth anniversary of the Australian shipwreck. He initially chose the name “Australia,” but his multi-lingual wife had different ideas. She suggested a Greek name—Euxenia—from *eu-xenos*, which translated literally as “high [regard for] the stranger.”62 The family tells of this meaning and believes it was given to remind them “of the lifesaving care bestowed on their husband and father, the stranger, by the people

of the distant land.‖ Today the name has been passed down through three generations of other women. Here again the memory is layered in subsequent generations of Miho’s descendants.

However, layering suggests, as has been noted throughout this study, a topographical configuration, requiring the removal of different strata to understand the true complexity of environment, the ground, and, in the case of family history—the earth itself as ephemeral for humans. The most recent generation of Baccich descendants has changed the place of the name Euxenia to a middle name, since its foreignness did not always work for the family in a primarily English-speaking environment. The story of the name rather than the name itself finds meaning in the present. This is a passage indicative of something Adriana Piscitelli found in her study of memory and gender among Brazilian families. Varying styles of telling of the past are readjusted generationally. The grandchildren and great-grandchildren frame their own actions around, for example, Miho’s brief mention of changing race relations in segregated New Orleans, and aiding others along the Gulf Coast when hurricanes struck—shifting these actions to meet needs in the present.

Mary Lee Gregory Baccich, for example, spoke of these changes when she told of her new name, and the traces Miho left to mark his thankfulness towards Australia. Asked if the overall story, and now her part in it, seemed to her a typical one of genealogical pursuit, albeit more dramatic than most, she replied, “I do. It is simply a story of the world.”

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63 Ibid.
How might this be so? She did not say except to continue to talk about the reciprocity of hospitality between her family and people in Australia.

The stranger, well received and nurtured, is a familiar one in teaching, in religion, and in history. Since the Homeric accounts of the Odyssey, there always have been aspirations for, and lives lived around, the concept of “guest-friendship, xenia…. How a civil society [is maintained] … [via this] mark of civilization.” Not totally altruistic, the idea of xenia takes into account that one has a better chance of being received as a guest if one receives others as guests. This might have been what Angelina recalled as she named her child, a child in a country new to her husband, and a husband who had seen other old and new cultures. Xenia remains a theme of democracy within the U.S. Despite the nativist movement, which voiced so much fear and prejudice towards immigrants in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, various government-sanctioned acts and genealogical efforts increasingly promote the inclusion of all immigrants, promote their welcome. Public events such as the official establishment of Thanksgiving as a holiday (1863), and the opening of Ellis Island Immigrant Museum (1990) are but two examples on a national scale from two centuries. The Family History Center atop the Los Angeles Holocaust Museum and part of the Museum of Tolerance allows a similar association between tolerance for many diverse people and an ideal, a hope, offered not only first to immigrants to the U.S. but also to others who may search for family history there.

Studying family history in the U.S., one then returns to ideas about nationality and citizenship. The idea of any welcoming nation would not have come to Marie Rosalie Pécot during most of her exile from Acadie. Nor did it come to her family, in the form of

a family history until much later. Individual stories—their content and their ways of being told—are dictated by what a particular society promotes as worth remembering or forgetting, as Selma Leydesdorff notes. Every culture also deals with what it wishes to forget. Both remembering and forgetting are represented within “individual psychology, the ways people tell about memories and the ways they like to be seen.” For the Baccich family, the shipwreck, though painful for Miho, included always recognition of an environment of this hospitality. Yet, both the poet Longfellow and the Baccich family represented accounts of ultimately redemptive memory in the names of women. The name Evangeline was not an Acadian one, but chosen by Longfellow to represent the angelic nature (from the Greek meaning like an angel) of an ideal and patient woman—a woman to carry memory. The angel Gabriel, biblically a carrier of news, did not transmit the same kind of message; his namesake is not given the leading role in Longfellow’s poem.

The Baccich account is relevant to a gendered history in another way. Miho had not only an educated wife to translate the story, but also six daughters and one son. Miho had then a female-dominated family in which the youngest daughter, Anna, typed the translation from her mother’s notebooks and gave them to the next generation. As noted in Chapter Five, much about family history depends upon these types of circumstances of transmission.

Both the Marie Rosalie and the Miho stories, gendered as they are, likely will yield additional meanings, other places where the appropriation of names and voices in

66 Selma Leydesdorff, “Introduction to the Transaction Edition,” in Leydesdorff, Passerini, and Thompson, Gender & Memory, viii
67 Ibid.
family history will allow different layers of personal and public relevance. We cannot know what they will be. Instead, we wait and think what types of circumstances welcome both living and archival memory.