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Carla Almeida Santos¹ and Grace Yan¹

Abstract

Seeking to contribute to ongoing investigations of diverse contexts of tourism consumption, the current investigation explores the meanings genealogical tourists attribute to their lived experiences and contextualizes those findings within larger social approaches to the human dynamics that drive contemporary tourism. Taking an interpretive turn, it proposes genealogical tourism as reflecting contemporary tourists' call for diversity of leisure interests and opportunities as well as their desire for a full range of varying intimacies, intensities, and complexities in their tourism lived experiences. In particular, it reveals tourism as a reflexive response to a sense of loss that underpins modern society, assisting in reaffirming both a generational sense of the self and a self-recognition that one has one's own perspective on the world.

Keywords

genealogy; meaning; phenomenology

Genealogy tourism is proposed to be one of the fastest growing subsegments of the heritage market. Indeed, the British Tourist Authority as well as the Scottish and the Welsh Tourist Boards have all highlighted genealogy tourism as an important stimulus for inbound international travel (Evans 1998; Longmore 2000). To date, however, the limited research that has sought to examine the intersection of tourism and family history research has mainly focused on travel to ancestral homelands (i.e., legacy travel; McCain and Ray 2003). While such work as certainly emphasized and contributed to tourism's recognition of the importance of responding to this rapidly growing segment, it has largely ignored the lived experience of genealogy tourism. In particular, the lived experiences of the intersection of tourism and family history research as revealed in travel to genealogical libraries have not been investigated (Yakel 2004). This is surprising not only because increasingly travel to genealogical libraries is perceived as providing powerful stimulus for travel to ancestral homelands (Brown 1998) but also, most important, because only through an ongoing investigation of diverse contexts of tourism consumption can a fuller picture of the larger forces driving tourism as a general contemporary phenomenon be developed. With this in mind, the current investigation proposes that genealogical tourism—approached in this study as amateur genealogists who travel to destinations that make available resources that support family history research (e.g., the Family History Center of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Salt Lake City, Utah)—merits examination as it not only

allows us to illuminate the lived experience of this particular phenomenon but also more broadly provides a powerful context through which to explore the larger contemporary forces driving travel and tourism. Consequently, this phenomenological investigation employs interviews and observations to explore the meanings genealogical tourists attribute to their lived experiences and to contextualize the findings within larger social approaches to the human dynamics that drive contemporary travel and tourism (Poria, Butler, and Aiery 2001, 2003).

Taking an interpretive turn, the investigation proposes genealogical tourism as reflecting contemporary tourists' call for diversity of leisure interests and opportunities as well as their desire for a full range of varying intimacies, intensities, and complexities in their tourism lived experiences, a shift from escapism to personal enrichment (Silberberg 1995). In particular, it reveals tourism lived experiences as acts of self-discovery by locating the self within broader narratives of families, ethnicities, and boundedness. Tourism becomes a reflexive response to a sense of loss that underpins modern society, assisting in reaffirming both a generational sense of the self and a self-recognition that one has one's own perspective on the world. Contemporary tourism, therefore, is a central component of the ontological project of the self (Giddens 1991) as tourists seek out opportunities to discover and reconstruct narratives meaningful to them.

¹University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

Amateur Genealogy and Tourism

Major developments in information access, such as the Genealogical Society of Utah's decision to microfilm their records at no charge, have served to propel amateur genealogy into a popular leisure activity (Bockstruck 1983; Marjanaa and Quintos 2001; Taylor and Crandal 1986). Specifically, amateur genealogists are those individuals who are interested only in history chapters of their own families, unlike genealogists who are professionals with special expertise. Bishop (2005) argued that genealogy endeavors are a form of reconnecting to the past much like the act of collecting, which, Baudrillard contended, "symbolizes an inward transcendence, . . . that phantasy whereby a projected detail comes to stand for the ego, and the rest of the world is then organized around it" (Baudrillard 1996, p. 79). The genealogical quest, therefore, starts for many with the desire to collect specific pieces of information about their ancestors, pieces that come to talk for us and locate us. Nevertheless, the motivation behind engaging in it has changed over time; whereas post-Revolutionary War genealogical research in the United States was largely influenced by social climbing derived through "social and cultural certification from Europe" (Taylor and Crandal 1986, p. 5), post-Civil War research was largely influenced by the "retrospective mood" of "Americans who were also, for the first time, fascinated with their nation's history" (Bishop 2005, p. 994). As Taylor and Crandal (1986, p. 8) explained, "the social fissures and psychic wounds" of the Civil War, combined with the nation's centennial in 1876, "served to remind persons of whose shoulders they stood on and whose dreams they aspired to fulfill." Subsequently, World War I and World War II popularized genealogy as families struggled to learn about loved ones lost in battle (Taylor and Crandal 1986, p. 12).

In contemporary society, self-identification processes constitute the single most meaningful dimension of genealogical motivation (Basu 2004; Yakel 2004), so much so that family history research has become a means of living toward mastery of a meaningful life. Understanding such processes has a long tradition in phenomenology that has provided extensive characterizations of embodiment, a starting point for theories of the self (Merleau-Ponty 1945/1962). Such characterizations have long proposed that embodiment, vital for self-identification, is a fundamental aspect of one's sense of self (Barsalou 1999; Carruthers 2007; Eilan, Marcel, and Bermudez 1995; Martin 1995; Thelen and Smith 1994; van den Bos and Jeannerod 2002). While feeling distinct from other objects and persons is one component of embodiment, another is the self-recognition that one has one's own perspective on the world (i.e., boundedness; Damasio 1994). By extension, "boundedness" can be experienced as also having one's history in the world. Thus, in discovering through genealogical tourism a sense of what and where our boundaries are (i.e., self-discovery), we are able to generate our

own perspective on the world—personal history included. Embodiment, however, is not sufficient for self-identification but rather one of its necessary conditions. Indeed, as individual identity in contemporary Western society is becoming more elusive and suffering from a substantial loss, suffocating postmodern ideologies, consumerism and the "inhumanity of numbers" assigned to differentiate individuals significantly undermine the act of self-identification (Basu 2002, p. 46). Consequently, individuals are limited to be explained on the basis of social processes where "mental is nothing but language" (Vollmer 2000, p. 500) while "language is nothing but a social phenomenon" (Vollmer 2000, p. 500). The boundaries used to mark differences become, therefore, delimited and invalidate the self (Baudrillard 1988; Debord 1994; Eco 1986; Jameson 1993; Woodward 1997). In particular, the disconnection of time and space and the resulting "disembedding" of social systems and reconfiguration of social relations have intensified the pace and scope of change (Giddens 1991, p. 19), resulting in "existential doubt."

Identity is, therefore, pertinent to the current discussion as genealogical tourists aim to affirm, negotiate, and maintain their identities. Moreover, as identity formation is an ongoing activity (Bauman 1997), in contemporary society "existential doubt" has led to reflexivity—a search for the authentic self (Urry and Lash 1994; Wang 1999, 2000). To be sure, reflexivity results from "increasing self-questioning together with proliferating sources of information" (Giddens 1991). Indeed, it is not surprising that narratives of reflexivity are so prevalent in contemporary discourse (Basu 2004) since it is increasingly difficult to discover oneself in the present or perhaps, in the case of traditional countries of settler immigration (e.g., United States and Canada), because of the psychological, moral, and cultural complexities of ascribing oneself to land where one has no "ancient claim" (Basu 2002, p. 46). Individuals, consequently, turn to their past in an attempt "to challenge the profoundly disruptive effects of instantaneous time" (Urry and Lash 1994, p. 250). Connecting to the past provides a sense of being distinctive, as if the past offers a heterogenic stage in which individuals play a different role. Genealogy, therefore, offers the possibility of a sense of "security, durability, stability and continuity" (Basu 2004, p. 33); allowing individuals to identify themselves. Issues of self-identification and self-discovery, however, are as entrenched in genealogy as they are in tourism motivation. To be sure, contemporary tourism motivation is largely a response to the reconfiguration of social systems and relations (Krippendorf 1987; Wang 1999). Such reconfiguration has resulted in an increasing need for identity affirmation, influencing choice of leisure activities (Csikszentmihalyi 1975; Dimanche and Samdahl 1994; Pearce 1993). Consider how tourism provides a forum for tourists to engage in modes of reflexive behavior that are thought to enhance sense of self as well as facilitate new forms of

identity (Maoz 2007), actions known to play a central role in self-identification (Desforges 1998, 2000). Moreover, in the context of tourism motivation, the same tensions are recognized by those who argue that the modern world is alienating and that tourists seek to escape this meaningless existence. Wang conceptualized this search for self in tourism as existential authenticity. Anchored in Heidegger (1962), he proposed that tourists are “in search of their authentic selves with the aid of activities or toured objects” (Wang 1999, p. 356), an act of resistance to “dominant rational orders of the mainstream institutions of modernity” (Wang 1999, p. 356). Genealogical tourism, therefore, can represent an inward pilgrimage, a way of “homecoming” (Basu 2004). Home when drawn from a broader definition becomes a “locus of belonging as mobile as it is static” (Basu 2004, p. 28). In this sense, home does not have to take a physical form but rather resides in one’s mind. Although some people travel to their ancestors’ homelands, others travel to libraries and record offices that contain books, diaries, archives, and other documents pertinent to the life stories of their ancestors. Indeed, genealogical tourists place such relevance on traveling to libraries and record offices that, as Fulton (2005) found, vacations are most often organized around their genealogical interests. Genealogical tourism, therefore, while ingrained with a lesser degree of sensory elements, enables acts of reflexivity, allowing capacious imaginary margins to ponder over, recount, and personify objective historical narratives, igniting a virtual “outward” and a real “inward” journey (Basu 2004).

Other meaningful dimensions of genealogical motivation are information search and the honoring of one’s ancestors (Yakel 2004). While the overall pursuit of family history is perceived as an inherent component of genealogy, there are specific purposes, such as to investigate one’s ethnic identity, religious history, and disease disposition, which are also common for those engaged in genealogical work (Yakel 2004). Genealogy, therefore, is most often approached as a pleasurable and meaningful leisure activity; the information search and management process involves different levels of participation and is reflective of the genealogists’ attitude toward the research—a short easy task or an enduring challenging mission. Moreover, as we consider major developments in information access, extending the ability to search genealogical records online “will have anything other than a net positive effect on . . . visitors totals, and result in increased visits to more traditional archive outlets” (Longmore 2000, p. 34). Certainly, while people may search for specific information online, in the course of doing so individuals are likely to come across information that cannot be properly explored by sitting at home and mail-ordering certificates; traveling becomes the next step (Longmore 2000). Furthermore, genealogical endeavors such as traveling to genealogical libraries are, therefore, “likely to provide a spur for the ‘real’ thing” (Brown 1998, p. 124). Finally, engaging in family history research is also an effective way of

managing material legacy (i.e., documents and archives) and honoring one’s ancestors. By searching, collecting, and managing information, genealogists ensure that their family history no longer remains brief and abstract; instead, personalizing historical accounts enables past family members to “live” on (Yakel 2004). For this reason, genealogists are also often characterized as “memory workers” (Lambert 2002) and “narrators of the family history” (Yakel 2004) whose research assists in creating a sense of collectivity and unity (Lambert 2002). While taking pride in their pivotal and conscious roles, they place a premium on “continuing” the family history by passing down intergenerational legacy (Fulton 2005). Such focus may be attributed to the contemporary “epidemic of alienation” previously discussed, whereby individuals are asking “Whom am I?” and then, curiously enough, are trying to answer the question by defining themselves according to certain biological, geographic, and cultural antecedents (Karp 1984, p. 2). Such alienation is the result of our contemporary *modus vivendi* where the continual contact and support between the older and younger generation has been lost because of, among others, population growth, mobility, and technological development (Karp 1984). Such loss of generational consciousness (Huyssen 1995; Lasch 1979) is particularly problematic when one considers that it is “bad enough to be alone in the world—but more frightening yet to consider being alone in the universe, bereft of any sense of kinship with those who have preceded you into eternity” (Karp 1984, p. 2). Thus, as research intensifies, it is more necessary that descendants value research efforts (Fulton 2005). Such searching, collecting, and managing of material legacy has further implications for tourism as they are proposed to instigate family members’ interest in traveling, seeking confirmation and connection to newly discovered histories (Basu 2004; Brown 1998; Fulton 2005; Longmore 2000; Yakel 2004). In this context, the information derived through family history research can function much like promotional materials, assisting potential tourists in forming destination images and, ultimately, driving travel destination choices.

The Historical Genealogy Department of the Allen County Public Library

This study identified a nationally recognized destination that makes available resources that support family history research: the Allen County Public Library located in the city of Fort Wayne, Indiana. Serving an annual visiting population of more than 400,000, it has been consistently ranked within the top five public libraries in America. Most significant, its Historical Genealogy Department is recognized as the largest U.S. public genealogical library, rivaling the private collection of the Library of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Utah. As evidenced by our recurring observation of waiting lines in front of the library before it

opens and the out-of-state license plates in the parking lot, the Historical Genealogy Department is one of the major tourist attractions in Fort Wayne. Its holdings include an extensive collection of published materials relating to U.S. military history as well as most microfilmed National Archives service and pension records covering every battle from the Revolutionary War through the Philippine Insurrection. In addition, it has numerous periodicals, local records, census records, military records, Native American records, African American records, Civil War regimental histories, and significant Confederate records from state archives. The library's collection also contains adjutant generals' reports, lineage society publications, soldiers' diaries, and more than 1,000 regimental histories (Cavanaugh 1983). The military collection continues to expand into data on 20th-century conflicts with additions of unit histories for World War I and World War II and casualty lists for the Korean War, Vietnam War, and Persian Gulf War.

Research Method

Phenomenology, both a philosophical movement and a range of research approaches, has long been practiced in areas ranging from education and nursing to existential psychology. Its central concern is with the study of the nature and meanings of a particular "phenomena" as they are experienced and perceived. It seeks to discover "inherent essences" (Li 2000, p. 865) by promoting notions of methodological flexibility and coresearching (Crotty 1998; Giorgi 1997; Schweitzer 1998; Valle and Mohs 1998; van Manen 1990). Frequently employing qualitative methods, phenomenological researchers explore and investigate small groups or social situations by using face-to-face techniques such as interviewing and participant observation (Bogdan and Taylor 1975; Bruyn 1966; Costelloe 1996; Denzin and Lincoln 1994, 1998; Fielding 1988; Porter 1995; Turner 1974). In the context of tourism, while not widely utilized, phenomenology represents a promising tool for understanding tourists' experiences (Caton and Santos 2007; Ingram 2002; Masberg and Silverman 1996). This study approaches phenomenology "as action research into the human dynamics of tourism" (Ingram 2002, p. 1). In particular, it employs empirical phenomenology to understand the lived experiences of genealogical tourists to the Fort Wayne Genealogy Library. Such a perspective was chosen because it assumes the social world as socially constructed, values social agents' subjective perspective as the starting point for analysis, and accepts interpretation as an intrinsic process of research—all values the researchers embrace. As questioning and observation are perceived as central to understanding and interpretation (Schütz 1976), this study benefited from both verbal interaction with those studied and observation of the situation and people studied, a combination often employed in empirical phenomenology.

Interviews

Interviews were conducted with a total of 27 genealogical tourists, including 21 females and 6 males. Of the 27 interviewees, 22 were Caucasian, 1 was African American, 3 were Chinese American, and 1 was Japanese American; 16 had previously visited the Fort Wayne Genealogy Library. To enhance contextual richness and minimize fragmentation (Lincoln and Guba 1985), individuals were approached in the lobby of the library; they were asked one filter question to ascertain if they were genealogical tourists (i.e., amateur genealogists who traveled at least 100 miles to specifically collect and examine information pertinent to their families' history) or professional genealogists. If they identified themselves as genealogical tourists they were asked if they would be willing to converse with the researchers about their lived experiences. Interviews lasted between 30 minutes to 1.5 hours. The interview guide consisted of two main questions: Can you describe why you started traveling for genealogical purposes? And can you describe what you find meaningful about traveling for genealogical purposes? Such a line of questioning was thought to facilitate a free dialogic flow and allowed for other open-ended questions to be asked based on emergent data. Therefore, rather than beginning with the most recent experience as a basis for the interview, interviewees were asked to talk in general about their experiences, allowing them to choose examples from their whole experience. The interviewing process was repeated until the researchers were no longer hearing or seeing new information as it related to their specific questions.

Data Analysis

All interviews were tape-recorded and transcribed. Data analysis was conducted independently by each of the researchers who later came together to compare notes, discuss results of analyses, and resolve discrepancies. Transcript analysis involved assuming the "phenomenological attitude"—*bracketing* and eidetic reduction. Bracketing refers to the suspension of "taken-for-granted" approaches to everyday life and reflecting on one's own bias, opinions, and assumptions about the phenomenon; this requires a continuing process of reflexivity throughout the entire phenomenological research process as well as an attempt at trying to see the world differently (Edwards 2001; Schweitzer 1998). Eidetic reduction refers to how "particular features of a phenomenon are reduced or set aside so that note can be taken of that which shows itself as universal" (Ehrich 1999, p. 25). The researchers, therefore, took it as their task to focus on the central, recurring themes that represented the essential meanings of the interviewees' experiences. The following steps formed the process of eidetic reduction and were carried out within an attitude of bracketing for each individual participant's transcript. First, audio recordings of each interview were

listened to and each transcript was read numerous times to achieve an overall discerning understanding of the whole phenomenon. The goal was not to focus on specific words but rather to identify the overall meanings within the audio recordings and transcripts. Second, each transcript was divided into segments of the participant's experience. The goal was not to focus on chronological form but rather to identify the various segments of the interviewee's master narrative. At this stage, all identified segments were included even if they were redundant or repetitive, and the exact words used were maintained. Third, the segments identified for each transcript were simplified to eliminate redundancy and repetition. For example, segments such as "knowing what really happened" and "understanding what my ancestors endured" were combined into "demystifying history." Fourth, the simplified segments were organized into a nonrepetitive list of descriptive meaning statements for each transcript. Fifth, descriptive meaning statements were then clustered into major interpretive themes that conveyed expressions of the genealogical tourism experience. For example, "demystifying history" and "moving from abstract to concrete" were clustered into "gaining a personalized understanding of one's family." Attention was paid to ensure that the language utilized to label each descriptive meaning statement was consistent with that of the interviewees. Last, major interpretive themes were synthesized with reference to the individual extended descriptions and the original transcripts to arrive at a final thematic description of the meaning in the lived experiences of genealogical tourists. At this stage, the researchers also discussed whether any content that may have been originally overlooked was now seen as an important clue to themes not initially perceived. This included going back to observation notes as well as any identified tensions and gaps in the interviews. Finally, to verify the accounts provided, seek a level of correspondence between the respondents and the researchers' accounts, and seek clarification, the present study utilized member checking in three ways. First, member checking at the pilot stage examined the thoughts and opinions of a sample of four genealogical tourists who were interviewed; their candid discussions lead to the development of the interview guide. Second, member checking took place throughout interviews as the researchers related descriptions and ideas back to interviewees to refine, rephrase, and interpret. And last, a final member check involved a sample of eight interviewees who agreed to provide feedback on the researchers' interpretation of their interview as a report of their experience.

Observations

"The interview provides leads for the researcher's observations. Observation suggests probes for interviews" (Erlandson et al. 1993, p. 99). Throughout data collection, observations were periodically recorded; observations were

conducted in the library reading rooms, cafeteria, and hallways and focused on the participants, their activities, and their interactions (Merriam 1988). Some of the questions guiding the observations were the following: What is the mood of genealogical tourists? What areas of the library do they use the most? And is there social interaction between genealogical tourists? Observations were treated as secondary data to assist in providing further probes for interviews as well as to further "make sense of" interview findings.

A Personalized and Contextualized Understanding of One's Family

An essential meaning of the lived experience of genealogical tourism involved engaging in a personalized understanding of one's family while contextualizing such understanding within a larger historical framework, positioning the genealogical tourism phenomenon as both practical and goal oriented. Specifically, it proposed genealogical tourism experiences as allowing those interviewed to move from abstract to concrete, from "matter-of-fact" to particular and meaningful accounts of their family's past.

I have a steady and secure life, but I traveled here to this library to fill in the blanks I don't know about my family. I feel I'm talking to my ancestors. . . . They're living people in my mind and my actions [travel to library] allow them to continue to be.

And,

My mother's family is Greek and French, and my Dad's is German. It's nothing new to me. Nobody has ever tried to hide that from me. [Genealogical tourism] is not about that . . . it's about knowing what was going on around them.

Accordingly, the excitement is in "[unraveling] the mystery for oneself, . . . and in the course of so doing, discover those long-lost ancestors" (Longmore 2000, p. 30). It is interesting that many of those interviewed proposed that the genealogical tourism experience remained focused on traveling, storytelling, and information collection. Deeper meanings such as identity development and sense of belonging as noted in the extant literature were, at times, dismissed by participants: "I'm from Kentucky. That is my home. I've been there all my life. And I belong there." This was particularly epitomized by a comment regarding the notion of genealogical tourism as contributing to a greater sense of belonging:

See, I don't need to bother with those big statements. All I want to know is the time my German great grandfather came to Virginia, how he made a living as a coal miner, how he meet my great grandmother, and when

they got married. How on earth I came to this world. That's all I care about. That's what this is . . . it's a great way to travel and also learn about my family. But I don't belong more, or know myself better because I came here and got this information. . . . It's not about me, it's about my family.

However, the statement, "how on earth I came to this world," does indicate a search for what and where personal boundaries are located—a process of self-discovery. This reveals the genealogical tourism experience as "[putting] flesh on the bones of a pedigree through researching" (Pitz 2001, p. B1). As a result, the genealogical tourism experience meant the ability to demystify history and eliminate certain obscurities. As Schement (2001, p. 6H) argued, "Understanding your past helps you comprehend who you are, why your parents are the way they are or were, and what in their background shaped your feelings and your identity." Thus, building a connection between past and present and obtaining a clearer understanding of past events and people is fundamental to the genealogical tourism experience as well as self-identification.

Of course it's superficial to think that one's identity is ever fully formed without consideration of heritage and history. By traveling here and finding out [about] my ancestors, I become more and more aware of what has shaped me and my family . . . what was going on around them. That doesn't change who I already am. . . . I find about their past, not me.

While the purpose of institutionalized history research was originally oriented toward finding factual truths, to those interviewed the genealogical tourism experience also meant moving beyond such a constrained approach and instead developing a personalized understanding of history, and, by extension, developing your history in the world (i.e., boundedness). As a participant who lost his father explained,

We mold other people's pasts to our own ends. Especially when I, a son who is searching sentimentally for my father, feel that my knowledge of him, which come from my memory, my mother, and the library archives is like a collection of souvenirs. I can't tell whether those told by family members or printed in books are simply the stories that I've chosen to imagine. . . . Don't get me wrong. I'm not saying that I'm making things up. What I learned from the books gave me space to ponder over my dad and his life. When my son grows older, he'll be able to read what his father imagined his grandfather to be.

Within the context of developing your history in the world, it should be noted that narratives of boundedness and

reflexivity were particularly prominent in interviews with individuals who self-identified as ethnic and racial minorities, as illustrated by the following comment by a Chinese American participant:

As a fourth-generation Chinese, so much of the family tales are already lost due to the cultural assimilation. But, you see . . . while I'm from Michigan, my physical features constantly remind me that I am different . . . living in a majority of a White vanilla world. No matter how American I'm on the inside, I'll never be seen as an American just because of my outside. This drives me to know how my ancestors endured. . . . How did they make a living after sailing across the Pacific Ocean without even a package? I know it's easy to just locate my family under the generic "Chinese-American experience." But that's not enough; I want to know the detail . . . that's why I travel to places like this.

This comment positions the genealogical tourism experience of those self-identified as ethnic and racial minorities as an act of reflexivity and boundedness, acts that bring about a deeply felt consciousness of one's status as a minority in multicultural America. An African American genealogical tourist articulated this:

Yes, we're all Black . . . at least from our skin. Whites can't tell we're different . . . but even we, ourselves, have lost the ability to locate which part of Africa our ancestors came from. I traveled to this library in the hope of finding out my ancestors' ethnicities. But I was disappointed. The history of the slaves and their homelands was blank, as if it did not deserve to exist. As if America did not care about us.

After a discussion regarding how other individuals, including Caucasians, also have a hard time locating their roots because of the scarcity and loss of archives and documents, he replied, "Sure, but even if they couldn't find any, I doubt if it would be so full of humiliation and discrimination. The power issues just aren't there." This aspiration to collect the unknown history comes partly from the observation that contemporary social discourse does not account for minority groups seeking to better understand their ancestral roots as well as their place in the larger society: "Whites can just look all around them . . . we have to look pass . . . to what they try to ignore." Traveling to this library and discovering their ancestors' voices means defying being drowned in a history defined and written by a dominant group while simultaneously finding the strength to challenge the contemporary sociocultural paradigm. Paradoxically and tragically, since history itself has been written and edited by those doing the conquering, the conquered, in turn, are not able to

find an outlet to challenge the system. Reaffirming that individuals “make their own history, but they do not make it as they please; they do not make it under circumstance chosen by themselves, but under circumstances directly encountered, given, and transmitted from the past” (Marx 1977, p. 300). The genealogical tourism experience, therefore, “[shapes] and [structures] the ways in which individuals understand and express themselves, relate to themselves, but also how they can be seen, described, and counted on by others” (Saar 2002, p. 236).

Devotion, Detail, and Purpose

Another essential meaning of the lived experience of genealogical tourism involved devotion, detail, and purpose. As such, to those interviewed, being a genealogical tourist meant being devoted, detailed, and purposeful, positioning the genealogical tourism experience as driven by intrinsic motivation. Indeed, conducting family history research was perceived to take precedence over any other leisure activities that these participants engage in during their vacation. As one respondent explained,

We like the location [of the library] . . . it's downtown and there's attractions around it. Today, we took a break to walk to the Botanical Conservatory. . . . We're old people and our eyes get tired after reading a lot. The plants refresh our eyes and help to get back to what we really came here to do. [Interviewer: Do you often take breaks and go visit local attractions?] Oh, yes! Sure. When we went to Utah. . . . We were there for over a week and saw lots. But when we got home what we shared was our findings. That's the memorable part . . . that's what our friends and family ask about our trips.

Another participant stated,

To relax?! Ha! If there's a vote for the most stressful and time-consuming thing in the world, I would choose genealogy. It's stressful and expensive to travel to these places. Of course, you find fun things to do during the trips . . . go out for dinner, check out local shops, visit museums . . . but, they're side things, not the reason why you come here.

This and other comments alike denoted the common message voiced by those interviewed that to consider the genealogical tourism experience as a casual entertainment-oriented activity is to undermine the intrinsic motivation involved. These lived experiences of genealogical tourism affirm the suggestion of Csikszentmihalyi (1975), Pearce (1993), and Dimanche and Samdahl (1994) that intrinsic motivation encourages convergence on issues of personal

autonomy and travel choice with immediate satisfaction as the driving motivator, while extrinsic motivation encourages convergence on issues of social recognition and social situatedness with delayed satisfaction as the driving motivator.

Furthermore, with respect to the narrative of rejection of genealogical tourism as casual entertainment, observations noted that many of those interviewed were observed in rather relaxed, good-humored dispositions, with many carrying out casual conversation with others nearby. Genealogical tourists were also often observed carrying shopping bags from local stores, leading to the belief that they were definitely undertaking other activities while in Fort Wayne, Indiana. While this may suggest a discrepancy between interviews and observation data, it must be further interpreted within the whole context of interviews. To be sure, given the obscurity of the old archives and the amount of information that has been accumulated for an extended period of time, doing family history research is a rather longitudinal pursuit. The fact that it is a longitudinal pursuit serves to explain not only why many of those interviewed report being repeat visitors to this and other libraries but also why they were likely to have reasonable expectations of their genealogical tourism experiences. “I've found a lot about my family already. . . . I came back just to see if I'll be lucky to find something more. I wouldn't be upset if I couldn't discover anything more.” Therefore, while those interviewed point to the intrinsic motivation in their experience, they are also aware that their trips may ultimately not result in any new findings, part and parcel of the experience. As one retired couple recalled,

We've been doing family history research for over 20 years. We've traveled all over. My wife has already figured out the pedigree tree of her family. I'm stuck in my great grandfather on my mother's side. Unfortunately, I haven't achieved any new findings today. Hopefully, next time I'll be able to make some progress. But it's still worth the trip. We never regret it . . . not like others [trips] where you get home and you need a vacation. These stay with you forever 'cause there's a clear purpose [for traveling].

Moreover, considering that multimotivational decision-making processes underpin holiday choices, it is not surprising that genealogical tourists experience a variety of other interests according to their needs and wants.

Contributing to Legacy

Another essential meaning of the lived experience of genealogical tourism involved the development of integrated accounts of one's ancestry that are then organized for prosperity, suggesting a feeling of pride in one's decision to travel and fulfilling the need for self-expression and self-affirmation: “Many of our friends wished their travels were

as satisfying as ours.” As one participant, who suddenly pulled out a U.S. dollar and raised it up to the sunlight, stated,

Do you see the threads in the dollar? Do you know who first invented inserting threads into money to make them strong and resilient? It was my great grand uncle! I came to this library to look up the details of how he did it. . . . I’m so proud of him!

This sentiment could be compared to feelings of patriotism in part because of their strength:

As a fourth-generation Canadian, I’ve got Scottish blood in me, and I’m utterly proud of that. I know what you are thinking, “That’s not a lot.” But what matters is not quantity. I feel that I should get to know about my ancestors better and tell their tales to my son.

Accordingly, much like a nation needs its national cultural identity recognized to unite its citizens, a family needs its identity and emotional bonding. For those interviewed, their genealogical tourism experiences meant the ability to assert their family’s identity and, in the process, build a stronger emotional connection with their family while contributing to its legacy.

We’re a potato family . . . we’re Irish. If I wanted to know about Irish tradition or heritage, I could just travel to Ireland . . . or read a book. I travel here ’cause I want to know about my family’s history and what they had to deal with when they came to America. I didn’t just come here ’cause I didn’t have anywhere else to go. I came here ’cause this vacation gives me something others don’t. I get to travel and help my family learn about our history. It’s a great combo.

And,

We do it ’cause we feel it’s important. You know? In today’s society kids no longer know about their past! You worry about loosing touch, about them forgetting who we are and came from. . . . It’s about connecting and honoring our past.

Therefore, those interviewed see their genealogical tourism experience as a means of promising an enriched past to future generations. In other words, they saw their experience as more than simply gathering facts; they viewed it as one means of building a legacy for relatives in the present and future, an act of contributing to a family’s social situatedness. This fascination with building a legacy is a direct result of living in a disposable society where “everything gets thrown out or torn down too fast, until all we’ve got left is

our genes” (Seabrook 2001, p. 58). As Postman (1992, p. 69) proposed, access to information instigated a society that “rejected the necessity of interconnectedness, proceeded without context, argued for instancy against historical continuity, and offered fascination in place of complexity and coherence.” Genealogical tourism is one response to technology’s control on contemporary society and identity. Increasingly, people “want something solid and substantial; that you can hold in your hand, that you can give to your children and grandchildren” (Wiltenburg 2002, p. 16). The pursuit of genealogical tourism is, therefore, not just a recognition of generational alienation but also a critique of the contemporary *modus vivendi* in which it occurs and an attempt to resist its effects, positioning the pursuit of genealogical tourism as an exercise in reflexivity.

Discussion and Conclusion

The rise of genealogical tourism reflects both the increasing call for diversity of leisure interests and opportunities as well as contemporary society’s search for emotional rather than material stimuli (Trauer 2006). Tourists are increasingly motivated by their desire for a full range of varying intimacies, intensities, and complexities in their search for lived experiences. Indeed, while different segments of tourism may exhibit different motivations and behavior, the tourism shift in the 1990s away from escapism to personal enrichment (Silberberg 1995) is reflected in the changes in genealogical research motivation. Motivation, an important topic in tourism literature (Crompton 1979; Dann 1981), is commonly seen as the driving force behind all actions (Iso-Ahola 1982). As Crompton (1979) noted, while it is possible to describe the who, when, where, and how of travel and tourism, it is more difficult to answer the why, a critical factor underlying all tourist behavior. The present research proposes some conceptual possibilities to shape further thinking on this topic.

Through interviews and observations of 27 genealogical tourists to the Fort Wayne Genealogy Library, this study suggests three main interpretive themes that encapsulate the genealogical tourism lived experience: a personalized and contextualized understanding of one’s family; devotion, detail, and purpose; and contributing to legacy. Overall, those interviewed view their experiences as a means through which they are able to further inquire into their family’s history and legacy while deriving great pleasure from the simple gratification of remaining on task and completing a family tree. Indeed, the present research proposes that what is most meaningful to genealogical tourists is the ability for contextualization and personalization of their family’s past by looking for facts, contents, and narratives as well as the ability to pass down intergenerational legacy and alleviate loss of generational consciousness, made possible through the devotion, detail, and purpose with which they faced their

genealogical experience. Tourism, therefore, is an act of both self-identification and social situatedness. While those interviewed have certainly developed a certain numbness and adaptation to the loss of individuality and social situatedness, genealogical tourism provides them with coping mechanisms to counteract feelings of being cut adrift. As globalization and modernity disintegrate, "the frameworks which give individuals stable anchorage in the social world" (Hall 1992: 274) and led to a loss of generational consciousness (Huysen 1995; Lasch 1979), individuals construct narratives of the self based on a "meaningful story with a past, present and future" (Moore 1997, p. 240). In this case, tourism becomes a component of the ontological project of the self (Giddens 1991). As self-identity cannot be built exclusively on the present, the past, the present, the future and other sociocultural factors interlink to shape self-identity. Indeed, the past and the present do not resemble two opposing trends as often proposed in tourism (Chang and Holt 1991; Taylor 2001); instead, to echo a comment by a participant, "they are an integrated whole." In the current research, tourism lived experiences are revealed as acts of self-discovery by locating the self within broader narratives of families, ethnicities, and boundedness. Tourism, therefore, becomes a reflexive response to a sense of loss that underpins modern society, assisting in reaffirming both a generational sense of the self and a self-recognition that one has one's own perspective on the world. However, it is also worth noting that those interviewed seemed to have a certain loss of a neutral stance when engaged in the process of narrating their genealogical tourism experiences. While some may consider this to be problematic, this study's epistemological stance is one that favors the notion that subjectivity is unavoidable in any kind of research; imagination and personalized accounts are empowering experiences and should be welcomed in social science research (Fulton 2005). As such, while not seeking to generalize this study's findings to all genealogical tourists, the current research proposes that pieces of history were often perceived to function as commercialized products that served to satisfy participants' fantasy for the unknown past. This denotes a striking resemblance to the commodified products offered in heritage and legacy tourism. To evoke the tourist's reverence and thus fondness, many legacy tourism sites choose to develop scenes purposely to match the expectations of the tourists. A touching historical ambience is artificially assigned to the tourism settings, lessening, at times, the original meanings. In both heritage and legacy travel as well as in genealogical tourism, history is selected by individuals who are left to pass judgment on events and historical characters. As Pritchard (2000, p. 257) observed, "Marketers are engaged in presenting us with a touristic vision of the future based on a careful and selective orchestration of the past." The main difference is that while the right to decide their stance and personalize historical accounts is left up to the genealogical

tourists, the same does not apply to heritage and legacy tourism, further revealing the paradoxical relationship among contemporary travel and tourism, self-identification, and social situatedness, an increasingly complex relationship considering that "groups are no longer territorialized, spatially bounded, historically self-conscious, or culturally homogeneous" (Appadurai 1991, p. 191).

The genealogical tourism lived experience is also a tool for further investigation into one's ethnic identity. In particular, such investigation finds its meaning in a contemporary society where, for example, being Greek American means something different historically, socially, and culturally than being German American. To be sure, while that which was mentioned above is worthy of note, the most fascinating discussion of the findings relates to tourism and its significance and contribution to an ongoing dialogue regarding multicultural citizenship in America. Indeed, contemporary discussions regarding genealogy research in the United States seem to be particularly sensitive and somewhat pressing with regard to multiculturalism in a society primarily composed of ethnic and racial minorities (Basu 2002; Quinn 1991; Yake 2004). The current research contributes to such an ongoing discussion from a human dynamics of tourism perspective. First, the fact that ethnic and racial minority genealogical tourists were more likely to narrate a desire to inquire into their ethnic history problematizes the relationship between an official American history and the history pursued by genealogical tourists. Certainly, the scarcity of ethnic genealogical resources is experienced not only as an increase in the hardships of locating information but also as an affront by dominant American societal ideologies, bringing into question ethnic minorities' citizenship in multicultural America. If this scarcity of resources is representative of genealogy libraries across the United States, genealogical tourism runs the risk of being used as a vehicle for the strengthening of dominant groups' voices and rules while at the same time invoking ethnic and racial minorities' absence from American historical accounts, providing a rationale for the exclusion of those at the margins, an exclusion identified as particularly problematic in tourism representational dynamics. Second, findings may also be interpreted as a preoccupation and manifestation of contemporary self-perceptions of being an "American." The contemporary surge of genealogical tourism as well as the narratives introduced by this study's genealogical tourists may contain implicit and explicit socio-cultural motives to counter the hegemonic forces of turning all individuals into undifferentiated Americans. By fashioning group distinctiveness and drawing on ancestry, one is able to rescue one's individuality by "offering affirmation that him/her is not simply the anonymous citizen, but the son of parents, with roots in the last, with a meaning larger than his own life" (Hadlin 1949, p. 415). In fact, while in popular social discourse America is often associated with emancipation and liberation for all, the resulting society that has been

structured around this philosophy involves intrinsic constraints, revealing, as Gerstle (1997) proposes, that not everyone is able to enthusiastically and effortlessly be, or become, an American. Consequently, genealogical tourism should not be regarded as simply curiosity regarding an historical past, nor as an add-on activity in which tourists engage. Instead, greater efforts must be undertaken to approach tourism in general as a conscious effort to discover and reconstruct narratives meaningful to the tourist. Thus, in the complex process of searching for "Americanness," travel and tourism becomes a tool for certain ethnic and racial minorities to re-create and reinvent their individual identities in response to the changing realities within American society. For these genealogical tourists, the past was strengthened to defy the intimidation and limitations that come through daily economic, political, and sociocultural structures, pressures, and encounters. As Sollors (1989) and Fuchs (1995) propose, such awareness of and the premium placed on hyphenated identity should not, however, be regarded as oppositional to being American; instead, they argue, to declare and embrace one's ethnic identity is a way of becoming American. After all, this nation is characterized by a cacophony of voices, with each of them being "truly American" (Fuchs 1995; Sollors 1989). Tourism can therefore be a tool for the promotion and facilitation of such socioculturally empowering processes.

From a managerial implications perspective, while tourism managers universally recognize the importance of identifying and providing for the needs of niche customers, they have overlooked opportunities associated with the genealogical tourism market segment (Evans 1998). In particular, some propose that the baby boomer generation has had, and will continue to have, the most considerable impact on the intersection of travel and genealogical research as they are thought to have the motivation and available time and resources to travel and collect pertinent ancestry line information (Bishop 2005; Fulton 2005; Quinn 1991). Concepts such as "product mix," "product life cycle," and "market segmentation" are integral parts of the everyday strategic thinking of tourism managers. By understanding and recognizing the lived experiences of the genealogical tourism market segment, managers will be able to focus their marketing efforts to attract those who have a more specific motivation driving their choices of destination and activities. Also, while this study approached the genealogical tourism phenomenon from an American perspective, it also proposes some insights for other nations, particularly other traditional countries of settler immigration such as Canada, New Zealand, and Australia that not only have an extensive multicultural population but also are reported to have the largest number of genealogical societies. Indeed, many nations' libraries and recording offices can tap into genealogical tourism by offering multiple venues for education. Considering that genealogical tourism is not area specific, cooperation among nations may be advantageous to all

involved. Surely the genealogical tourist does not have the opportunity to decide on the geographical area in which his or her ancestors were born; in this sense, all destinations have something to offer in terms of ancestry and genealogy, suggesting that "institutions holding records are not therefore in direct competition for genealogical tourists" (Longmore 2000, p. 35). Finally, the importance of investigating diverse contexts of tourism consumption cannot be underestimated. It is only through an ongoing investigation and conversation between diverse contexts of tourism consumption and various theoretical explanations that a fuller picture of the larger forces driving tourism as a general contemporary phenomenon can be developed.

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Bios

Carla Almeida Santos is an assistant professor at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Her principal research interests include sociocultural and political aspects of tourism.

Grace Yan is a doctoral student in the department of recreation, sport and tourism at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Her research interests focus on issues of self-identity and tourism.