

Migration Experiences

Investigation 3

A DEPTH STUDY ON MIGRATION EXPERIENCES



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A Depth Study on Migration Experiences

Introduction

You are invited to consider:

- ways of starting a depth study on migration experiences;
- some speculation questions;

Then you investigate and make inquiries into

- how some people observed the challenges migrants faced and;
- the experiences of individuals as they are recorded in an archive of personal testimonies.

The experience of migration, at and beyond Bonegilla, was different for:

- men, for women, for the young and for the old.
- for those who were unmarried and those with happy or unhappy families.
- for those who had or found supportive friends or family and those who did not.
- for those who already spoke English and those who had to learn a new language.
- for those who arrived at very busy times and those who did not.
- for those who came only because they had no other country to live in and those who chose Australia for a better life for themselves and their families.
- for those who had valued work skills and those who did not.
- for those who had sick family members and those who did not.

For all of them migration involved uncertainty. Each of them dealt with that uncertainty differently.

This depth study:

- centres on how ordinary people tried to manage their lives at a time of great personal uncertainty;
- invites empathetic understanding of the life-changing experience of migration that many Australians have had;
- involves encounters with multiple voices rather than an easily recognised set of sources;
- requires visitors to deal with sometimes conflicting evidence revealing very different perspectives;
- engages visitors in making sense of personal observations and memories.

Unlike other curriculum topics, the depth study on 'migration experiences' moves from the national to the personal. This depth study is likely to reset visitors' ideas of history and the ways to do it. National history can sometimes be portrayed as a story of inevitable progress. The tone can sometimes be triumphant and celebratory. So for example, there may be emphasis on the ways post-war immigration was central to nation building and how post-war immigration changed Australia economically, socially and culturally.

However, a focus on migrant experiences, and particularly the hardships migrants encountered, can disrupt such positive accounts. The voices of the newcomers complicate the stories of the successes of post-war immigration that form part of a progressive Australian nation-building story. It is sobering to note that 22 per cent of all who arrived between 1947 and 1971, that is just over one in five, subsequently left Australia for a variety of reasons.



Key Inquiry Questions

- What challenges did non-British people face in migrating to Australia in the post-war years?
- What challenges did others see the newly arrived facing?
- What challenges do the migrants and refugees themselves recall facing?



Speculation Questions

Visitor guides might introduce materials by discussing some initial speculations about differences in migration experiences:

- *How might the challenges for a single migrant differ from a migrant with family responsibilities?*
- *How might the challenges for secondary school aged children be different from those for their parents?*
- *How might the challenges for a displaced person arriving in 1949 differ from those for an assisted migrant arriving in 1965?*

Visitor guides might explore present-day echoes. They may ask visitors to think about:

- *What is it that leads people to migrate from one country to another, especially when they do not have the language of the new country?*
- *How do people go about trying to manage their lives at times of great personal uncertainty?*

Investigating Migration Experiences

A. Investigating Observations on the Challenges Migrants Encountered

Public stories of the effects migration had on people's personal lives are difficult to find. One set of records from the National Archives of Australia reveals immigration officers' observations on the difficulties newcomers had. Another two sets of records give observations on specific family stories which reveal personal relationships tensions – one involves a murder and the other child neglect.



Inquiry 1 – Two Social Workers Report on Problem Cases at Bonegilla

The Department of Immigration employed resident social workers to help new arrivals, especially those with problems. The social workers knew a lot about the government services and community supports which could prove useful for people in difficulties. They were often able to muster help for newcomers from local community groups. Their reports were prepared for immigration officers, not for the public.



*Archive 1 – Open the link below to go to the
National Archives of Australia*

<http://www.naa.gov.au/>

1) Scroll down the page to: ‘Search the collection’

The Archives' reading room in Canberra has relocated to Old Parliament House until late 2019. [Read more]



SEARCH THE COLLECTION

Search our extraordinary collection – find your story here



FOR GOVERNMENT


Find information and records management policies, standards and guidance



EXHIBITIONS AND EVENTS

Come to our events, from public talks to exhibitions and more!

2) Find and click on ‘RecordSearch’



Explore: [Search the collection](#) [Search the website](#)

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Search the collection

Important Notice

From Monday 1 July 2019, prices for ordering copies of records held in the national archival collection increased by 4.2 per cent in line with CPI. [Read more]

Use [RecordSearch](#) to search our collection.

Note: RecordSearch contains names and images of Indigenous Australians now deceased.

Need proof of arrival in Australia?

[Make a request](#)

3) Select ‘Advanced Search’ and go to ‘Items’ at the bottom of the page to bring up the required search window.



4) Enter the following number in into the “Item Barcode” panel:
75121

The screenshot shows the 'Advanced search - Items' page. The navigation bar is similar to the previous page, but the 'Advanced search' button is now highlighted. Below the navigation bar, the page title is 'Advanced search - Items'. The main search area contains several input fields and dropdown menus. The 'Item barcode' field is highlighted with an orange circle and contains the number '75121'. Other fields include 'Keywords in title', 'Exclude keywords in title', 'Series number', 'Exclude series number', 'Control symbol', 'Exclude control symbol', 'Date (eg 1921 or 1939 to 1945)', 'Physical format', and 'Exclude'. There are also checkboxes for 'also search notes' and 'Exclude'.

5) Select 'Search' at the bottom of the page and the report titled '*Social Worker's Report, Bonegilla Reception and Training Centre, Victoria*' should come up.

Then you need to select to 'View digital copy'

Basic search

Advanced search

NameSearch

PhotoSearch

Passenger arrivals

Help

Item details

Welcome guest

New search

Refine search

⏮

⏪

⏩

⏭

Displaying 1 of 1

List report

Details report

View digital copy

Item details for: A437, 1949/6/381

Title	Social Worker's Report, Bonegilla Reception and Training Centre, Victoria
Contents date range	1949 - 1952
Series number	A437 Click to see which government agency or person created this item.
Control symbol	1949/6/381
Citation	NAA: A437, 1949/6/381
Item barcode	75121
Location	Canberra
Access status	Open with exception
Reason for restriction	33(1)(g)
Date of decision	18 Sep 1991
Physical format	PAPER FILES AND DOCUMENTS (allocated at series level)
Visibility and availability indicators	26. No issue outside the Archives - age related
Date registered	21 Apr 1998

6) The digital copy opens in a new window.

Australian Government

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF AUSTRALIA

Your story, our history

NAA: A437, 1949/6/381

View multiple pages

Rotate image

previous

next

Page 1 of 56

jump to page

go

Title

Contents range

Series number

Control symbol

Access status

Barcode

Social Worker's Report, Bonegilla Reception and Training Centre, Victoria

1949 - 1952

A437

1949/6/381

Open with exception

75121

Twitter

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Print

COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

Department of Immigration.

FILE OF PAPERS.

SUBJECT: Social Worker's Report

Bonegilla R.T.C. Centre

Victoria

Depth Study – Migration Experiences

Bonegilla
Migrant
Experience

10

Meet Rachel McLaren, social worker, 1950

Rachel McLaren had just been appointed as a social worker in March 1950 when she was required to submit a report. She thought her own fresh views of the place might help explain how new arrivals perceived it.

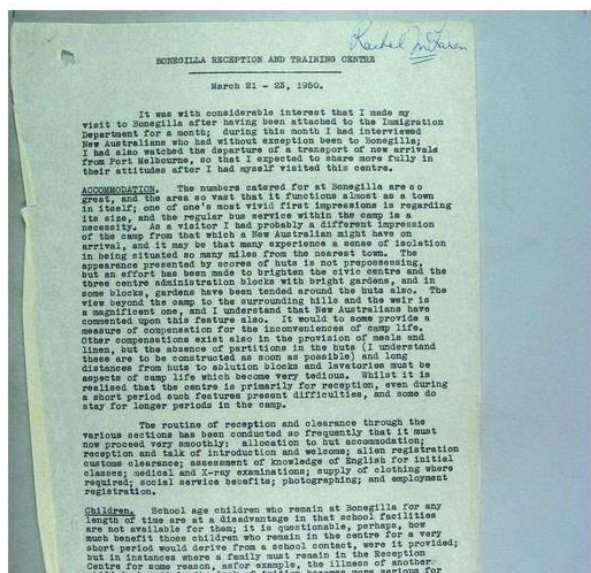
7) Read Rachel's report on pages 49 – 50. There is an option to 'jump to page' and you should enter 49 in the pane and select 'go'.



NAA: A437, 1949/6/381

View multiple pages

Rotate image



[previous](#) [next](#)

Page 49 of 56

[jump to page](#) [go](#)

Title	Social Worker's Report, Bonegilla Reception and Training Centre, Victoria
Contents range	1949 - 1952
Series number	A437
Control symbol	1949/6/381
Access status	Open with exception
Barcode	75121





Questions

- 01 What was it about Bonegilla that impressed her most?
- 02 What kinds of problems did social workers deal with?
- 03 Which categories of migrants had special needs?
- 04 What was being done to improve the place? How did she see the reception of children being improved?
- 05 What were some of the most common problems she found among displaced women?

Most reception processes could be completed within a day or two. This left newcomers with little to do while they waited for a job.



Question

- 06 What was being done to help people fill in their time?

Meet Bunty King, social worker, 1952



Mabel King (known as 'Bunty'), was an experienced and respected social worker. She arrived in Bonegilla from Britain just as the first assisted migrants were arriving and shortly after the Italian protests in 1952.

She was a shrewd reader of people's circumstances and a sympathetic and skilled counsellor. She thought displaced persons had more problems than assisted migrants. The assisted migrants, she thought, 'knew why they came'. They were often younger than the displaced persons and, further, they carried fewer traumatic war memories.

8) Go to screen pages 10 to 13 for Bunty King's report in October 1952.

? Questions

- 07 Which parts of these two reports from Rachel McLaren in 1950 and Bunty King in 1952, written 18 months apart, are the same and which parts are quite different?
- 08 Which problems persisted?
- 09 Which new developments indicate ways the centre was changing to meet the needs of assisted migrants?
- 10 What does Bunty King particularly like about the YWCA hut?

Social workers and language instructors complained that the centre directors did not value their work. The directors were primarily focused on moving the newcomers out of the centre and into jobs. As a result they did not make funds available to support social work. The only resources social workers could muster were from the local community and from an amenities fund, which was raised from canteen and cinema profits.



Question

11

From these two reports do you see any evidence that social workers believed their efforts were undervalued?



Inquiry 2 – Tensions

Michael Cigler, from Czechoslovakia 1951, was a keen observer of how displaced persons fared at and beyond Bonegilla. Like others he witnessed the pressures migration and camp living had on family relationships.



'I was sorry for the married people. Of course, there were a lot of problems. The infidelity in those camps, you see ... And some of the marriages were more or less marriages of convenience, you know, some of the women, like some German girls just wanted to get out of Germany. And very often well educated, intelligent, they would marry some immigrant from some European country with low intellect, educational standard and it was a tragedy.'



Question

12

Why did people want to get out of post-war Germany?

Murder?

Meet Ingeborg Radevic who was stabbed to death by her husband



Inge and Milo Radevic arrived in Australia on 27 March 1950 as a married couple. They were both displaced persons and their selection papers are attached to the file investigated below. She was from Germany, but became Yugoslav on marriage to Milo. She was 24 years old; he was 16 years older.

Ten days after arriving Milo killed Inge, stabbing her repeatedly with a knife. He was charged with murder and appeared before a court on 29 June 1950. The jury found him not guilty of murder, but guilty of manslaughter. The judge sentenced him to two years gaol with remission possible for good behaviour.

He was released after he had served about twelve months of his sentence. He made a successful application asking that he might not be deported. In October 1953 he was killed by an electric train.



Archive 2 – Open the link below to go to the National Archives of Australia

<http://www.naa.gov.au/>

- 1) Go to 'Search the Collection' → then to 'Recordsearch'.
 - 2) Go to 'Advanced Search' → then select 'Items'.
 - 3) Go to 'Item barcode' and type in: 1882953
 - 4) Select 'Search' at the bottom of the page and the report titled 'Radevic. M' should come up → then select to 'View digital copy'.
- (You may choose to download a PDF version of the file as well)

Basic search Advanced search Name Search Photo Search Passenger arrivals Help

Item details Welcome guest

New search Refine search

Displaying 1 of 1

List report
Details report

PDF (24.7 MB) View digital copy

Item details for: A441, 1952/13/3554	
Title	Radevic, M
Contents date range	1949 - 1953
Series number	A441 Click to see which government agency or person created this item.
Control symbol	1952/13/3554
Citation	NAA: A441, 1952/13/3554
Item barcode	1882953
Location	Canberra
Access status	Open
Date of decision	01 Jun 1995
Physical format	PAPER FILES AND DOCUMENTS (allocated at series level)
Date registered	22 Nov 1996

Mein frau (my wife, my woman)

5) Go to screen pages 56, 55, and 53 for reports of the trial in the Melbourne Sun on 8 June 1950 and other newspapers.



Question

13

Are there any significant differences in these newspaper reports?

6) Go to screen pages 68 to 71 for those parts of the chief patrolman's account of the incident which deal with the immediate aftermath.



Question

14

Does the account of an interview with the accused immediately after the event fit the defence's argument that there was no premeditation?

"Prisoner at the bar you are charged with murder"

7) Go to screen pages 11 and 12.



Questions

15

Why did the judge not give a more substantial sentence for a fatal knife crime?

16

What is the difference between murder and manslaughter?

9) Go to screen pages 8 and 9 and then 6 and 7.



Questions

- 17 Why was Milo not deported once he had served his sentence?
- 18 What arguments does Milo give about why he should not be deported?

10) Go to screen pages 39, 39 and 57 for the social worker's reports.



Question

- 19 What light do the social worker's observations throw on the incident?



Inge's grave site, Albury Cemetery

Inge's meagre possessions consisted of little beyond well-worn clothes, three pairs of shoes and a packet of new nylon stockings (screen pages 40-41). They were insufficient to pay for a grave marker on what her parents called her 'anchorage' in Australia (screen page 20). It remains an unmarked grave in Albury cemetery, 2019.



Questions

20

What do Inge's possessions reveal about her financial circumstances?

21

Why was no photograph taken of her grave for her parents?

11) Go elsewhere in the file notice for several inquiries (e.g. screen page 62) made by Inge's parents and friends in Germany.

12) Go to screen page 65 and 64 for the file note about what happened to the customs officer involved in the incident that led to violence.



Question

22

Does it matter if the customs officer was or was not kissing Inge when Milo confronted them?

13) Go to screen pages 15.



Questions

23

Why do you think this file was established?

24

What problems did the incident pose for administration officials?



Thinking about the death of Inge Radevic

- *Inge's voice is missing from this file. Might her account of her relationship with Milo and her version of events have made a difference to:*
 - *the verdict of the jury?*
 - *the sentence imposed by the judge?*
 - *the decision of the prison authorities to grant early release?*

- *Would her voice have made a difference to your view on whether Milo Radevic got away with murder?*

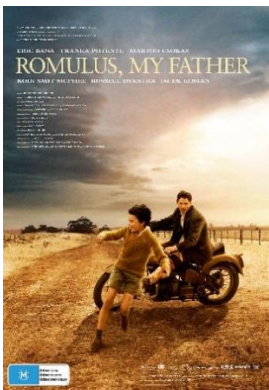


Inquiry 3 – Child Neglect

Meet ‘Romulus, My Father’, whose marriage was fracturing at Bonegilla.



Raimond Gaita has written two books which tell something of the stories of his father, Romulus, who was from Romania, and his mother, Christel, who was from Germany. The books are called *Romulus My Father* and *After Romulus*. The first book has been made into a feature film.



Bonegilla was unhappy for the Gaita family. Raimond remembers, *“Tensions existed between my father and my mother, dating back to Germany, and deepened by her romances with other men on board ship and now also in the camp at Bonegilla. More than once my father was told, ‘Control your wife, she is stealing our husbands’. When a woman from Bonegilla visited her husband [at the work camp on the Loddon River] she told my father that I was neglected and running wild.”*



Archive 3 – Open the link below to go to the National Archives of Australia

<http://www.naa.gov.au/>

- 1) Go to 'Search the Collection' → then to 'RecordSearch'.
- 2) Go to 'Advanced Search' → then select 'Items'.
- 3) Go to 'Item barcode' and type in: 4105197
- 4) Select 'Search' at the bottom of the page and the report titled 'GAITA Romulus born 28 December 1922; Christine born 6 November 1928; Raimund [Raimond] born 14 May 1946' should come up → then select to 'View digital copy'.

The screenshot shows the 'Item details' page for A12025, 724-726. The title is 'GAITA Romulus born 28 December 1922; Christine born 6 November 1928; Raimund [Raimond] born 14 May 1946'. The 'View digital copy' link is circled in orange. A green mouse cursor is pointing at the link.

Item details for: A12025, 724-726	
Title	GAITA Romulus born 28 December 1922; Christine born 6 November 1928; Raimund [Raimond] born 14 May 1946
Contents date range	1950 - 1950
Series number	A12025 Click to see which government agency or person created this item.
Control symbol	724-726
Citation	NAA: A12025, 724-726
Item barcode	4105197
Location	Canberra
Access status	Open
Date of decision	06 Nov 2012
Physical format	PAPER FILES AND DOCUMENTS (allocated at series level)
Alternative series and control symbol	CP900/2, 22A/18
Date registered	26 Oct 1999

- 5) Go to screen pages 20, 24, 5, 9 and 2 and examine the documents in this government file.



• Thinking about the Gaita Family

The official documentation related to the Gaita family gave no attention to the problems they faced. Their selection papers show official interest in their health and in Romulus' work history. No documentation was kept relating to the 4 year-old-boy leaving Bonegilla to live with his father on a construction camp in rural Victoria, presumably because both parents and the employer agreed to the arrangement.

- *What does a careful reading of the official records reveal about the level of official concern for how newcomers coped with the problems of migration?*

Investigating Migration Experiences

B. Investigating a Collection of Personal Testimonies



Migrant accounts of their migration experiences are most commonly found in the transcriptions of oral history interviews. Visitors will encounter a clamour of voices and will have to make decisions about which to listen to most attentively and which to evaluate carefully.

Detecting common themes in Australian post-war migrant arrival and early settlement stories

Probably the biggest challenge related to uncertainty. The future was unpredictable. Newcomers were financially insecure and were unsure about the kind of support they might get from family, friends, the local community and government. They were anxious about their own well-being and that of their immediate family life. They worried about their reception within the community. Would the host community be supportive or would it resent the migration scheme as bringing too many people too quickly? Migration was risky.

Explaining differences in migrant stories

Some migration storytellers dwell on their anxieties and tell of the trials and tribulations they faced with building new lives in an unfamiliar land. They detail some of the risks and dangers associated with migration. Many recall discrimination and troubles with fitting in. Others are proud to show their resilience, how they developed a sense of belonging and how they addressed hardships. For many, migration was bitter-sweet.

Differences are most often explained in terms of time of arrival, stage of life, gender, language proficiency, work skills and level of family or other support. Personal characteristics such as resilience or openness to change are important, but the overall migration experience is a challenge for all newcomers.



Inquiry 4 – Investigating an archive of personal testimonies



Archive 4 – Open the link below to go to ‘Belongings’ , an archive of personal testimonies established by the former NSW Migration Heritage Centre

<http://www.migrationheritage.nsw.gov.au/belongings/index2764.html?migrantaccommodation=bonegilla>

Note that the site has been archived, but is still available for research.

This website has been archived and is no longer updated.
The content featured is no longer current and is being made available to the general public for research and historical information purposes only.



The NSW Migration Centre had a wide brief to record migrant experiences in New South Wales over a long-time span since 1945. At least 23 of those interviewed arrived via Bonegilla and have provided a random selection of personal testimonies: 8 were displaced persons; 13 were assisted migrants who arrived in the 1950s, including 4 from Holland, 2 from Greece, 2 from Italy, 2 from Hungary, and 2 from what used to be called Yugoslavia and 1 from what was Czechoslovakia. Because of the changing boundaries between European countries, 2 have to go to some trouble in explaining where they originated and 2 were assisted migrants who arrived in the 1960s.

Three approaches to the archive are suggested here. Visitors might:

1. start with an individual story;
2. compare and contrast small groups of stories;
3. look to the whole archive and draw from it stories that relate to a decade study or a group study.



Thinking about the 'Belongings' Archive

Throughout, the big question must be how and why was the 'Belongings' virtual exhibition established?

- *Why were these stories recorded and published?*
- *What impact was the collection of stories intended to have?*
- *What prompted people to tell their stories?*
- *What did they expect readers might want to know?*
- *Why might the people who did not tell their story have been reluctant to do so?*



Inquiry 5 – Meeting three displaced persons



Archive 5 – Open the link below to go to
'Belongings'

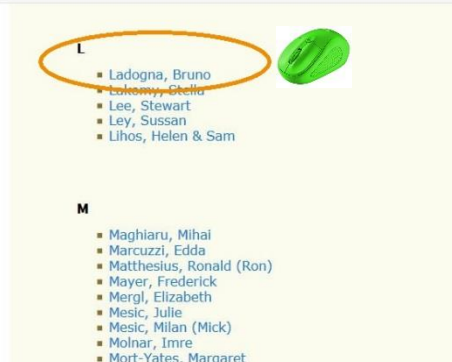
<http://www.migrationheritage.nsw.gov.au/belongings/index2764.html?migrantaccommodation=bonegilla>

1) Find the grid with the first initials for 'Family Name'



2) Click on 'L' to find Bruno Ladogna → then Click on his name to learn more about Bruno who arrived as a 16 year old with his comic books.

www.migrationheritage.nsw.gov.au/exhibition/belongings/belongings-by-surname/index.html#L



3) Then find and read about Eleonora (Vercinski) Conolly, a 17 year old who chose to establish a life independent of her family..

4) Then meet Draga Williams who arrived as a 12 year old in a 'basically lost' family.



"The Bonegilla huts were just open huts. They segregated the men and women and children much to everyone's disapproval. When we heard the kookaburra we did not know what it was, then one man said, 'Look, even the birds cry here!'" (Draga Williams).



Questions

- 25 Why did these displaced persons come to Australia? What were the push and pull forces?
- 26 What kinds of back stories do they tell about life before they migrated?
- 27 Was getting a job important to them?
- 28 Which personal skills did they enjoy developing?
- 29 Which objects were important to them? Why?



Inquiry 6 – Meeting three assisted migrants of the 1950s



Archive 6 – Open the link below to go to ‘Belongings’

<http://www.migrationheritage.nsw.gov.au/belongings/index2764.html?migrantaccommodation=bonegilla>

- 1) Find the grid with the first initials for ‘Family Name’
- 2) Click on ‘A’ to find **Franca Arena** → then Click on her name to learn more about Franca who who left Bonegilla when she was stalked by a persistent and unwelcome suitor.
- 3) Then find and read about **Trudy Schilling** who with her husband found jobs at Bonegilla and coped with the ‘cosy’ living arrangements.
- 4) Then meet **Edda Marcuzzi**, a young 19 year old mother, who lived under terrible conditions.



*“If I start to remember, really remember, I cry.”
(Edda Marcuzzi).*



Questions

30

Why did these assisted migrants come to Australia? What were the push and pull forces?

31

Why were their experiences of Bonegilla so different?



Inquiry 7 – Meeting two assisted migrants of the 1960s



Archive 7 – Open the link below to go to
'Belongings'

<http://www.migrationheritage.nsw.gov.au/belongings/index2764.html?migrantaccommodation=bonegilla>

- 1) Find the grid with the first initials for 'Family Name'
- 2) Click on 'W' to find **Harry Wolff** → then Click on his name to learn more about Harry who brought his German records.
- 3) Then find and read about **Peter Gwodsdz** who brought his piano accordion.



"In 1956 we had a school visit to Auschwitz [concentration camp]; because I was born as a German and not Russian or Polish that was my punishment. I was 10 years old and still remember the words at the top of the gate; Arbeit macht frei (work makes you free)." (Peter Gwodsdz).



Questions

- 32 Why did these two people come to Australia? What were their push and pull forces?
- 33 What importance did each person give to getting a job?
- 34 What is significant about how they found a place in community life?
- 35 Why were the things they brought with them important to them?



Inquiry 8 – Meeting other migrants and refugees

Altogether there are personal testimonies from 23 people who arrived via Bonegilla on the NSW Migration Heritage Centre web-site 'Belongings'.

<http://www.migrationheritage.nsw.gov.au/belongings/index2764.html?migrantaccommodation=bonegilla>

- The stories told here are often family stories rather than individual stories. Children seem to remember clearly the impact of the war on their fathers and their fathers searching for work. All seem to report with satisfaction their achievement of self-sufficiency in their new country.
- Several of the testimonies are from those who were teenagers at time of arrival and recall the concerns of teenagers: Eleonora Conolly; Anne Hawker; Dragoslava Williams; Eddie Marcuzzi; Bruno Ladogna, Harry Wolff.
- The displaced tell of their vivid memories of war – violence, hunger, deprivation, loss of family members (e.g. Elizabeth Mergl and Amelia Brinkis). So do some of the assisted migrants (e.g. Jan de Kruiff).
- There are several who were actively involved in rebellions and revolutions. Domenico Sidonio gives his account of the Italian 'rebellion' in 1952 and that account complicates other accounts. Two teenagers tell how they were involved in the Hungarian revolution in 1956 (Imre Molnar and George Bansagi).

- Several tell of the advantages in having language skills (e.g. Franca Arena). Others allude to the difficulties they had in acquiring a new language (e.g. John Kena).
- Nearly all tell how they found a way into community life. Some found not only comfort but community acceptance in music or with skills they brought with them (e.g. Peter Gwosdz).
- Nearly all comment on what it felt like to be at Bonegilla. The most vivid impressions in this collection of testimonies seem to have been with the food and the weather extremes (e.g. Anto Potocnik and Ferdi Boers). Some saw it as 'scary'. Many saw it as little more than an extension of the unfeeling bureaucracy that had taken control of their lives. There are complaints about the lack of privacy in communal living quarters, the food and the weather. Yet others remember it as 'pretty good'.



Questions

- 36 What have these people emphasised in the back-stories of their migration and their recall of feelings?
- 37 Which common themes run through the testimonies? What are the main differences between these testimonies?
- 38 Do they emphasise social mobility?
- 39 Did they find people in the host community helpful?
- 40 How did these people buck against the conditions imposed and sometimes take small acts of defiance?
- 41 Do they retain attachments to their former homeland? How?
- 42 What might they have omitted from the stories told?
- 43 Why do people remember the Bonegilla Reception Centre so differently?

Investigating Migration Experiences

C. So What...



Thinking about migration experiences

Finally we come again to that 'so what' questions:

- Why investigate the migration experiences?
- In what ways are migration experiences significant?
- What are the most important stories to tell about how this place was experienced?

For many former migrant residents Bonegilla looms as no more than a small part of a long, long journey. It was no more than a transition point. Yet many now claim it as a significant memory place which embodies aspects of their migration journey into Australia. Here they recall what coming to Australia felt like.

Since, and even before the post-war surge in immigration, many Australians have shared similar migration experiences. Nearly half of the population of Australia has been a migrant, or has a parent who was a migrant. A study of the experience of migration centred on Bonegilla could help us understand more about people who have come to Australia for many different reasons and in many different circumstances since the year that Bonegilla closed its doors. The more we learn about what being a migrant or a refugee was like, the more we learn about ourselves and about each other.



Key Inquiry Questions

Now return to the Key Inquiry Questions on page 6 and record your responses to these historical inquiry questions.

