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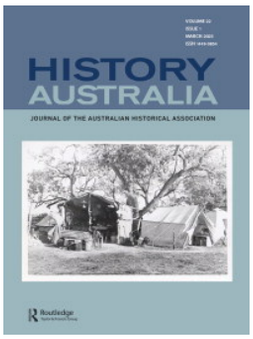

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'Give it to the Mitchell, it would be there for those that come after us': interwar feminists' archival activism and the recasting of Australian history

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ABSTRACT

In the 1920s and 1930s, Australian feminists – alongside their counterparts across the world – confronted their omission from collecting institutions as they fought exclusion from the entangled pursuits of history-writing and nation-making. Extending the scholarship on women's 'archival activism', this article details feminists' heterogenous mnemonic practices by studying how author Miles Franklin and suffragist and pacifist Vida Goldstein created paper trails and considered posterity. Scrutinising both women's divergent archival strategies and memory networks not only clarifies their decisions about housing their collections in state archives or gender-dedicated institutions but reveals their deliberation over whether the nation constituted a suitable vector for the transmission of feminist knowledge.

KEYWORDS

Archival activism; feminist history; material culture; Miles Franklin; Vida Goldstein

In 1927, the novelist Miles Franklin (1879–1954), fresh from London with a trunk full of manuscripts and ambitions to reignite her 'brilliant' career, began her love affair with Sydney's Mitchell Library. The product of antiquarian David Scott Mitchell's vast collections and his cousin, suffragist Rose Scott's prescience, the founding bequest was promised to the public in 1898 and opened in 1910.[1] After a decade writing from the British Museum reading room, the ability to study 'books and articles of the old days' at will exhilarated Franklin, invigorating her pastoral novels and fuelling the nationalist turn that defined her career as a critic.[2] In this she was not alone. The library vitalised Australian history by expanding the opportunities for its study from original documents. Indeed, the collection transformed its parent institution, the Public Library of New South Wales, into a 'de facto national library of record' until at least 1935, when the federal government directed the

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[1]Brian H. Fletcher, *Magnificent Obsession: The Story of the Mitchell Library, Sydney* (Allen & Unwin, 2007), 19–41; Miles Franklin, *My Brilliant Career* (William Blackwood, 1901).

[2]Miles Franklin to Margaret Dreier Robins, 6 May 1929, in *My Congenials: Miles Franklin & Friends in Letters*, 2nd ed., ed. Jill Roe (HarperCollins, 2010), 215.

Commonwealth National Library to establish 'special collections … in Australian history and literature'.[3] Yet, despite Franklin's rhapsodies about the 'gorgeous library of Australiana recently at our disposal', with time she confronted the collection's limits and their implications for settler knowledge of the past, not least the cursory presence of women's words.[4] Prompted by her struggle to document her feminist forebears' lives from the library's holdings, and enabled in her collecting by her permanent return to the family home in Sydney after decades of living in lodgings overseas, Franklin began accumulating her own archive in earnest.[5] Soon after resettling in 1932, she resolved to leave the institution her own bequest. At the time of their gift, in 1954, the Franklin papers constituted Australia's most comprehensive writer's archive and, 70 years later, remain among the library's most treasured possessions.

Miles Franklin's historical consciousness extended beyond the cultivation of her *nachlass*. As Jill Roe argues, finding herself marooned in Sydney after spending her adult life abroad, Franklin refashioned herself as a literary 'elder'. Age and status not only behoved her to 'record and reflect, to supervise the young, [and] to support good causes', but to guide generational change.[6] For Franklin repatriation meant confronting the fear that her elders and contemporaries alike – figures ranging from Catherine Helen Spence, the 'grand old woman' of pre-Federation politics and letters, to Beatrice Davis, postwar Australia's pre-eminent literary editor – might slip from the nation's consolidating consciousness.[7] Accordingly, alongside her rigorous self-archiving, she adopted a role as an executor-cum-memory-keeper, cajoling aging comrades and their families to publish memoirs, deposit their papers in official repositories and entrust her with their manuscripts as she fought to preserve women's contributions to a maturing national culture, a project that was both shaped by and constitutive of White Australia.[8]

For a writer whose archive has shaped Australian literary history, Franklin's mnemonic practices and relationships with collecting institutions – like so many of her female contemporaries' – remain understudied. Nevertheless, her firm conviction that materials produced by women deserved space in state-run repositories was not unusual among her contemporaries. Responding to Honor Sachs' call for feminist historians to thicken their 'understanding of archival history and practice' and Sharon Crozier-De Rosa's writing on the transmission of feminist knowledge in Australia, Britain and Ireland, this article begins by assessing Franklin's efforts to assemble an archive teeming with the words of those women she deemed nation-builders alongside a push to institutionalise feminist memory.[9] From the outset of their enterprise, Australian feminist historians approached the archive as a site of possibility and

[3]Peter Biskup, *Library Models and Library Myths: The Early Years of the National Library of Australia* (History Project Inc., 1983), 24–25, 35–37.
[4]Franklin to Robins, 6 May 1929, in *My Congenials*, 215.
[5]Jill Roe, 'Miles Franklin's Library', *Australian Cultural History* 11 (1992): 53–54, 63.
[6]Jill Roe, *Stella Miles Franklin: A Biography* (HarperCollins, 2008), 398.
[7]'Death of Miss Spence', *Observer*, 9 April 1910, 45, http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article164695101.
[8]The phrase 'memory-keeper' is from Sharon Crozier-De Rosa, 'Ruby Rich's Dream Library: Feminist Memory-Keeping as an Archive of Affective Mnemonic Practices', *Literature* 4 (2024): 62–74.
[9]Honor R. Sachs, 'Reconstructing a Life: The Archival Challenges of Women's History', *Library Trends* 56, no. 3 (2008): 651; Crozier-De Rosa, 'Ruby Rich'; Sharon Crozier-De Rosa, 'Feminist, Non-Feminist, and Anti-Feminist Uses of Feminist Memory', *Histoire sociale/Social History* 56, no. 116 (2023): 275–300; Sharon Crozier-De Rosa and Vera Mackie, *Remembering Women's Activism* (Routledge, 2019).

provocation, one whose operation required 'demystifying' and processes of distortion and erasure needed reversing.[10] Following the humanities' turn from an emphasis on 'archive-as-source' to 'archive-as-subject', historians have begun theorising women's archival activism. Often taking the form of 'archive stories' – histories and ethnographies of such collections' provenance, uses and effects – such work has documented organisations and individuals who preserved records to legitimate their accounts of the past, challenge masculinist historical narratives and refigure knowledge production.[11]

One focus of this research is the formation of feminist archives in the 1920s and 1930s. These range from 'universal' repositories such as New York's World Centre for Women's Archives (WCWA) (1935–40) and Amsterdam's International Archives for the Women's Movement (IAV) (1935–) to institutions such as the Women's Service Library (WSL) (1926–) and Suffragette Fellowship (1928–ca.80) that emerged in Britain to preserve 'authentic' suffrage histories and thus shape the memory of a contested past. In Australia, historians have considered the contemporaneous 'library feminism' of figures like Ruby Rich who pressured 'memory institutions' to establish women's collections.[12] From the late nineteenth century, as revealed by actions like their donation of periodicals and organisational materials to repositories such as Dutch suffragist Aletta Jacobs' library (the IAV's cornerstone collection), Australian feminists sought to preserve their heritage, but lacked the infrastructure to ensure this happened closer to home.[13]

Moving from Sydney to London, this article considers the transnational solution developed by Franklin's erstwhile mentor, Vida Goldstein (1869–1947) – the Victorian suffragist, pacifist and, by the 1930s, one of Australia's few surviving 'first wave' feminist leaders – to the problem of posterity. In so doing, it illuminates contests over whether and how women approached state archives and what this revealed about their vision of the relationship between women's activism and national history. Contrasting Franklin's concern with White women's uncertain place within the 'Australian family', Goldstein's disillusioned postwar retreat from national politics – after having stood, unsuccessfully, for federal office five times between 1903 and 1917 – coincided with her fond memories of 1911. Then, she had lived among a chosen 'family', the close-knit British Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU), her activism commemorated in the elaborate 'memoryscape' its members built in

[10]Kay Daniels, 'Women in Australia: An Annotated Guide to Records', *History Workshop*, no. 67 (1979): 191. See also Judith Allen, 'Evidence and Silence: Feminism and the Limits of History', in *Feminist Challenges: Social and Political Theory*, ed. Carole Pateman and Elizabeth Gross (Allen & Unwin, 1986), 173–89.

[11]Ann Laura Stoler, *Along the Archival Grain: Epistemic Anxieties and Colonial Common Sense* (Princeton University Press, 2009), 44; Antoinette Burton, 'Introduction: Archive Fever, Archive Stories', in *Archive Stories: Facts, Fictions, and the Writing of History*, ed. Antoinette Burton (Duke University Press, 2005), 1–9.

[12]Sarah Lubelski, 'Kicking off the Women's "Archives Party": The World Center for Women's Archives and the Foundations of Feminist Historiography and Women's Archives', *Archivaria: The Journal of the Association of Canadian Archivists*, no. 78 (2014): 95–113; Francisca de Haan and Annette Mevis, 'The IAV/IIAV's Archival Policy and Practice: Seventy Years of Collecting, Receiving, and Refusing Women's Archives (1935–2005)', in *Traveling Heritages: New Perspectives on Collecting, Preserving and Sharing Women's History*, ed. Saskia E. Wieringa (Askant, 2008), 23–45; Eileen Luscombe, *History and Legacy of the Suffragette Fellowship: Calling All Women!* (Routledge, 2024); Laura Mayhall, 'Creating the "Suffragette Spirit": British Feminism and the Historical Imagination', in Burton, *Archive Stories*, 232–50; Crozier-De Rosa, 'Ruby Rich'; Crozier-De Rosa and Mackie, *Remembering Women's Activism*, 19–78.

[13]H.J. Mehler, ed., *La Femme et le féminisme: Collection de livres, périodiques, etc. sur la condition sociale de la femme et le mouvement féministe* (V. Giard & E. Brière, 1900), 143, 210, 233–34.

Bath, the Suffragette Wood (1909–68).[14] Previous biographers have held that Goldstein's destruction of all but the most self-effacing materials has occluded her interior life, rendering her either inscrutable or a screen for presentist projection.[15] Certainly, such absences demand a different approach than to Franklin's innumerable egodocuments. Here, following Wendy Rouse's queer history of United States suffragists, this article offers a new reading of Goldstein's scrapbooks to explore her decision to export all that she considered historically important to London, feeding the flames of transnational feminism while quietly rebuking the national idea that Franklin nurtured.[16]

Preserving White women's place in the 'Australian family'

Miles Franklin's debut novel, *My Brilliant Career*, was published in 1901. Within a year the country governess became a sensation, her acclaim coinciding with her family's move from regional Goulburn to suburban Penrith and amplified by the simultaneous enfranchisement of White women in New South Wales and the Commonwealth of Australia. Franklin played little part in these events. Nevertheless, her protagonist Sybylla Melvyn's subversion of the marriage plot in favour of single life and self-possession resonated with the nation's suffragists. Thrilled by the seemingly autobiographical novel and its exuberant author, Rose Scott and Vida Goldstein drew Franklin into metropolitan feminist circles, providing her the confidence and contacts to emigrate to the United States.[17] Upon arrival in Chicago in 1906, she immersed herself in the city's reform networks. After starting as a private secretary, by 1913 she joined her compatriot Alice Henry as co-editor of the journal *Life and Labor*, for the National Women's Trade Union League (NWTUL), the first organisation dedicated to working women's causes across the United States. By night, she wrote still more furiously, dramatising the sexual and economic disadvantages that beset Australian women in *Some Everyday Folk and Dawn* (1909), alongside unpublished fictions wrestling with gender, economic inequality and marriage in America.[18] Amid the flux of the First World War, Franklin made for London. Having joined the militant suffragist Women's Freedom League (WFL) on a previous visit, Franklin scrutinised the movement's fortunes, reporting for American and Australian newspapers, and relaying the latest to Scott, Henry and the Goldsteins.[19]

Aside from two extended trips home, Franklin remained in Britain until 1932. During these years – in which she worked as a military nurse and an office clerk

[14]Sarah Di Nardi and Steven High, 'Memoryscapes', in *The Routledge Handbook of Memory and Place*, ed. Sarah Di Nardi, Hilary Orange, Steven High and Eerika Koskinen-Koivisto (Routledge, 2020), 117–18.
[15]Janette M. Bomford, *That Dangerous and Persuasive Woman: Vida Goldstein* (Melbourne University Press, 1993), xiv, 220, 227; Jacqueline Kent, *Vida: A Woman of Our Time* (Penguin Random House, 2020), 279–84.
[16]Wendy L. Rouse, *Public Faces, Secret Lives: A Queer History of the Women's Suffrage Movement* (New York University Press, 2022), 2–12.
[17]Janet Lee, *Fallen Among Reformers: Miles Franklin, Modernity, and the New Woman* (Sydney University Press, 2020), 7–9.
[18]Miles Franklin, *Some Everyday Folk and Dawn* (William Blackwood, 1909); Lee, *Fallen Among Reformers*, 16–31.
[19]Drusilla Modjeska, *Exiles at Home: Australian Women Writers 1925–1945* (Sirius, 1981), 156–68. See, for example, Franklin to Scott, 9 December 1912, in Roe, *My Congenials*, 76–79; Franklin to Alice Henry, 23 March and 16 October 1916, 9 June 1920, Miles Franklin Papers 1841–1954, Mitchell Library (ML), Sydney, MSS364/114/1/5, 11–13, 57; and Jill Roe and Margaret Bettison, eds., *A Gregarious Culture: Topical Writings of Miles Franklin* (University of Queensland Press, 2001), 51–77.

– Franklin pivoted from the 'socially engaged' literature of her adolescence and years among Midwestern progressives for nostalgic tales set in the high-country of her childhood. When Franklin returned to Australia to care for her mother, she had written six novels evoking the nineteenth-century 'squattocracy', published under the pseudonym 'Brent of Bin Bin' between 1928 and 1956.[20] In Sydney, the repression of her 'American self' and her public commitment to liberal feminism accompanied Franklin's assertion of her 'patriotic credentials' as an author.[21] Privately, as friends observed, she seethed with 'feminist rage' at the indignities of 'androcentric' national life.[22] The Australia that she had left, Franklin told NWTUL president Margaret Dreier Robins, 'took a wonderful lurch ahead in all progressive laws & woman's enfranchisement', but had 'stagnated ever since'.[23] These convictions are not easily reconciled with her public reticence to address women's issues, which led Susan Sheridan and Drusilla Modjeska to posit that Franklin, disillusioned with the 'promise of feminism', abandoned the cause.[24] Such analysis is exaggerated. Franklin had, necessarily, relinquished the role of 'expatriate professional feminist', but lectured on the legacy of women's enfranchisement, attended United Associations of Women (UAW) events, and joined the board of its journal, *Australian Women's Digest*.[25] Furthermore, her archive reveals the interplay between her increasingly private feminism, her literary aspirations, and her public mission to determine 'what is intrinsically Australian in Australian literature' and shape a canon accordingly.[26]

From her return to Sydney, apprehensions of her elders' mortality troubled Franklin. Such anxieties fuelled her self-imposed duty as a figure bridging the nineteenth-century 'woman movement' and legal equality feminism to preserve her forebears' voices, if not explicitly for the feminist cause, then as a constitutive component of the Australian experience.[27] Franklin never articulated a holistic vision of her 'memory activism' – that is, her efforts to achieve mnemonic and political change by recollecting and allowing others the means to reconstruct women's animating roles in fin-de-siècle cultural and political life. Nevertheless, she understood, as historian Maria Grever later explained, that 'knowledge of the feminist past is generally not self-evident. It must be explained and acquired again and again'.[28] As settler feminists turned to history, seeking to insert the 'pioneer woman citizen' into Australia's national consciousness, Franklin extended their project by badgering

[20] Lee, *Fallen Among Reformers*, 10–11, 151–52.
[21] Paul Giles, *Antipodean America: Australasia and the Constitution of U.S. Literature* (Oxford University Press, 2014), 331.
[22] Nettie Palmer, diary entry 23 December 1933, in *Nettie Palmer: Her Private Journal 'Fourteen Years', Poems, Reviews and Literary Essays*, ed. Vivian Smith (University of Queensland Press, 1988), 127; Miles Franklin Diary, 22 August 1936–25 February 1938, 2 February 1938, 86, ML, MSS364/4/2.
[23] Franklin to Robins, 13 March 1924, in Roe, *My Congenials*, 169.
[24] Modjeska, *Exiles at Home*, 2; Susan Sheridan, *Along the Faultlines: Sex, Race and Nation in Australian Women's Writing 1880s–1930s* (Allen & Unwin, 1982), 93–95.
[25] Sheridan, *Along the Faultlines*, 82; Roe, *Stella Miles Franklin*, 414, 422, 436.
[26] Miles Franklin Diary, 10 February 1938–10 January 1946, 3 April 1938, ML, MSS364/4/4, 23.
[27] Marilyn Lake, *Getting Equal: The History of Australian Feminism* (Allen & Unwin, 1999), 9–12.
[28] Maria Grever, 'The Pantheon of Feminist Culture: Women's Movements and the Organization of Memory', *Gender & History* 9, no. 2 (1997): 364. See also Ann Rigney, 'Afterword: The Multiple Entanglements of Memory and Activism', in *Remembering Social Movements*, ed. Stefan Berger, Sean Scalmer and Christian Wicke (Routledge, 2021), 299–304; Yifat Gutman and Jenny Wüstenberg, 'Introduction: The Activist Turn in Memory Studies', in *The Routledge Handbook of Memory Activism*, ed. Yifat Gutman and Jenny Wüstenberg (Routledge, 2023), 5–15.

women she admired to follow her in collating, preserving and accessioning documents from which histories could later be written.[29]

Ida Leeson, whose appointment as Mitchell Librarian in 1932 made her the first woman to hold an executive position in an Australian library, proved a vital collaborator in Franklin's enterprise. A university graduate who began working at the library in 1906, Leeson established a reputation as an astute collection builder after her promotion to principal accessions officer in 1919. A decade later, her appointment to head the Mitchell – ordinarily the successor to the principal librarian – devolved into acrimony when library management appointed a male deputy principal librarian to prevent a woman from taking charge.[30] Following prominent UAW members, Franklin adopted Leeson as a *cause celebre*. Yet, unlike many of her female colleagues, Leeson neither expressed feminist sympathies nor associated with women's organisations.[31] Nevertheless, she was determined to redefine 'Australiana' beyond the early nineteenth century and the record of exploration. Leeson demonstrated these commitments in 1933, when she secured for the library the archives of Australia's most significant publisher, Angus and Robertson.[32] Although Franklin disliked Leeson's political conservatism, their shared conviction that generating historical knowledge depended on libraries – the creation of which they understood as part of Australia's 'coming of age' – and position as White women championing an 'independent' national culture underpinned a lasting friendship.[33]

Since Franklin's repatriation the Mitchell had been the locus of her public life; a meeting place, a sanctuary from her noisy home, and the fountainhead for her writing.[34] She soon recruited Leeson to her crusade to circulate her former London housemate and little-known Victorian feminist Mary Fullerton's poetry, inducing the librarian to proofread manuscripts and assist with their publication.[35] She also enlisted other library staff in her memory activism. Having learnt that Lucy Spence Morice, the niece of the political reformer Catherine Helen Spence, sought to conserve her aunt's papers, Franklin plotted to secure them for the Mitchell. In 1936 she secured Leeson and her superiors' permission to appraise Spence's archive. The following June she visited Adelaide, returning with a trove of 'rescued' speeches, sermons and letters that still constitute the library's Spence collection.[36]

For Franklin, who idolised Spence, the visit was not solely altruistic. Then, and over the next decade, Morice made Franklin gifts from Spence's estate, some of

[29]Thea Gardiner, 'The Changing Commemorative Landscape during the Australian Interwar Period: The "Pioneer Woman Citizen" Joins the "Citizen Soldier"', *Melbourne Historical Journal* 48, no. 1 (2022): 31–41.
[30]Fletcher, *Magnificent Obsession*, 103–12.
[31]Sylvia Martin, *Ida Leeson: A Life* (Allen & Unwin, 2006), 64–65.
[32]Ibid., 97–110; Neil James and Elizabeth Webby, 'Canon around the Hub: Angus and Robertson and the Post-War Literary Canon', *Southerly* 57, no. 3 (1997): 52.
[33]Franklin to Robins, 6 May 1929, in Roe, *My Congenials*, 215. See, for example, Franklin to Mary Fullerton, 20 January 1935, ML, MSS364/17/5-7; and Carole Ferrier, ed., *As Good as a Yarn with You: Letters between Miles Franklin, Katharine Susannah Pritchard, Jean Devanny, Marjorie Barnard, Flora Eldershaw and Eleanor Dark* (Cambridge University Press, 1992), 12.
[34]Martin, *Ida Leeson*, 112–18; Paul Brunton, ed., *The Diaries of Miles Franklin* (Allen & Unwin, 2004), xxvii.
[35]E., *Moles Do So Little with Their Privacy: Poems* (Angus & Robertson, 1942); E., *The Wonder and the Apple: More Poems* (Angus & Robertson, 1946); Martin, *Ida Leeson*, 112, 118.
[36]Franklin to Lucy Spence Morice, 10 August 1936 and 31 August 1937, ML, MSS364/22/291, 317; Morice to Franklin, 3 and 7 August 1937, ML, MSS364/22/311-15. See also Mitchell Librarian to Morice, ca. September 1937, Mitchell Library Letter Books (Out-letters), Letter Book 1 September 1937–31 December 1937, ML1937/1254.

which, Franklin rued, the Mitchell 'seized … as treasure'.[37] Nine years later she advocated, unsuccessfully, for the Commonwealth Literary Fund to reissue Spence's first novel, *Clara Morison* (1854), in its canon-building Australian Pocket Library series.[38] Franklin's urgency – revealed in enquiries about Morice's crusade to wrest Spence's diaries from her estranged biographer, Jeanne Young, and exhortations to send every 'scrap … to the Archives' – stemmed from her frustrations writing a biography of Rose Scott for a history of New South Wales' 'pioneer women'.[39] Scott's family, she told Lucy, had shared 'pitiful[ly] … little': 'newspaper cuttings without any date or name of paper!!! Only … yarns – no family archives'. Here, however, Franklin unwittingly confronted the limits of the library's investment in her project. Ten years earlier, Scott's nephew Helenus Wallace had donated her papers to the Mitchell where, for reasons of resourcing, they remained uncatalogued and inaccessible until 1979.[40] Starved of basic histories, let alone documentary evidence, Franklin relied on memories alone, an approach – she knew – few others could replicate.[41] The contrast between her struggle to narrate Scott's activism with the abundance of research that sustained her essay-turned-biography of Joseph Furphy, the author of the outback classic *Such is Life* (1903), who came through efforts like Franklin's to be recognised as 'the father of the Australian novel' – hand-delivered by her co-author and Furphy's self-nominated literary executor Kate Baker – cannot have been clearer.[42]

Fuelled by these experiences, Franklin advised women writers and activists to create and preserve records of the past. No sooner had Baker departed Sydney than Franklin proposed that she gather personal material omitted from their book and 'give it to the Mitchell or a Melb[ourne] Library … [so] it wd be there for those that come after us'.[43] Likewise, and reiterating that her project extended beyond parochial affection for the Mitchell Library, she asked Sophie Fullerton to 'save' her sisters' letters: 'they shd go to one of the libraries some day: to Canberra or Melbourne'.[44] Franklin's preoccupation with her peers' legacy was reflected in her own archive, which predominantly dates from her first return to Sydney. Much later, scandalised by John Middleton Murry's release of Aotearoa New Zealand author Katherine Mansfield's 'unexpurgated' love letters in 1951, Franklin wrote to the literary agent Florence James expressing her relief that 'being obscure' would prevent her being 'exposed like that after death'.[45] Such fears motivated purges of romantic

[37]Morice to Franklin, 25 September 1938, 10 January 1944 and 25 April 1948, ML, MSS364/22/347-51, 417-19, 436-37; Miles Franklin Diary, 8 June–8 December 1937, ML, MSS364/4/3, 52, 83.
[38]Miles Franklin, 'Australian Classic no. 4: Clara Morison', *Australian New Writing*, no. 3 (1945): 42–46.
[39] Franklin to Morice, 31 August 1937 and 18 April 1945, ML, MSS364/22/317, 403; Morice to Franklin, 7 September 1937, ML, MSS364/22/319-27; Miles Franklin, 'Rose Scott: Some Aspects of Her Personality and Work', in *The Peaceful Army: A Memorial to the Pioneer Women of Australia, 1788–1938*, ed. Flora Eldershaw (Women's Executive Committee and Advisory Council of Australia's 150th Anniversary Celebrations, 1938), 90–107.
[40]*Guide to the Papers of the Scott Family in the Mitchell Library, Sydney, Part I* (Library Council of New South Wales, 1979), ii.
[41]Franklin to Morice, 31 August 1937, ML, MSS364/22/317.
[42]Miles Franklin and Kate Baker, *Joseph Furphy: The Legend of a Man and His Book* (Angus & Robertson, 1944); Brigid Magner, *Locating Australian Literary Memory* (Anthem Press, 2020), 35–37.
[43]Franklin to Kate Baker, 6 September 1939, ML, MSS364/9A/447.
[44]Franklin to Sophie Fullerton, 17 June 1943, Papers of Alan Wilson and the Wilson Family 1860–1990, State Library Victoria (SLV), Melbourne, YMS16247/2/5.
[45]Franklin to Florence James, 2 November 1951, ML, MSS364/26/505; John Middleton Murry, ed., *Katherine Mansfield's Letters to John Middleton Murry 1913–1922* (Constable, 1951), overleaf.

letters and publishers' rejections as well as requests like her instruction that terminally-ill Mary Fullerton return or destroy their 20-year correspondence.[46] Nevertheless, Franklin's penchant for secrecy – manifested in her love of pseudonyms – coexisted with her attention to posterity. Between the early 1930s and her death, Franklin, drawing on her clerical training, filed thousands of letters alongside dozens of diaries and notebooks in an idiosyncratic system that spanned hat and shoe boxes to the endpapers in her working library, in which she pasted over 1000 'enclosures': inscriptions, photographs, newspaper clippings and letters.[47] Whatever apprehensions she disclosed to friends about prying biographers had been dispelled by the 1940s, when she anticipated their work: appointing executors, planning to endow her eponymous Australian literature prize (first awarded in 1957), and dictating the circumstances of her enormous bequest to the Mitchell.[48]

Self-archiving alone was insufficient for Franklin. Whether because she questioned her correspondents' curatorial habits or because she sought wider audiences for their accounts of Australia's formative decades, on resettling in Sydney she encouraged elders to draft memoirs. Formally, Franklin was fascinated by the possibilities of life-writing as an alternative to the novel, 'for which some sort of a track has been blazed', and the potential of reaching a popular readership, either through publication or inclusion in official repositories, from which they could be recovered.[49] At Franklin's solicitation, Mary Fullerton posted instalments from a planned sequel to her acclaimed reminiscences *Bark House Days* (1924) to Sydney from amid the Blitz.[50] Unsatisfied with her friend's efforts, Franklin urged Fullerton's life partner Mabel Singleton to 'write up your memoirs of Mary'. Although Franklin maintained that the task was for 'pleasure', posterity was on her mind. If the project proved uncommercial, she could 'leave the MSS to the Mitchell'.[51] When Mabel demurred, Franklin insisted. If she suffered writer's block, Singleton could acquire a dictaphone and 'talk it out'.[52] Despite Franklin's persistence, whether moved by procrastination, the frustrations of long-distance collaboration or, as historian Sylvia Martin speculates, her reticence to publicise the nature of their relationship, Singleton never attempted the project.[53]

Franklin had prior experience, having coached her trade union comrade Alice Henry to write a memoir upon returning from New Deal California to Depression-era Melbourne. Here, tensions emerged between Franklin's aesthetic sensibilities and her impulses to memorialise cherished elders. Despite insisting that Henry formally document her life story, it became clear after Henry's death in 1943 that Franklin – despairing of her friend's waning memory and literary talent – viewed the undertaking as an act of charity. Asked to complete the manuscript by Henry's executor,

[46] Lee, *Fallen Among Reformers*, 30; Roe, *Stella Miles Franklin*, 420, 429, 440.
[47] Sandra Knowles, '"Oh, for Some Refuge – for Myself – to Be Myself": The Search for Gender Neutrality in the Diaries of Miles Franklin', *Australian Feminist Studies* 25, no. 63 (2010): 63; Roe, 'Miles Franklin's Library', 56–60.
[48] Franklin to Beatrice Davis, ca.1944, Angus and Robertson archives, ML, MSS3269, 1/1/vol. 236/161; *Guide to the Papers and Books of Miles Franklin in the Mitchell Library, State Library of NSW* (Library Council of New South Wales, 1980), ii.
[49] Franklin to Ambrose Pratt, 2 May 1936, ML, MSS364/27/347.
[50] Mary Fullerton circular letters, 21 June, 22 July and 15 October 1940, SLV, YMS16247/2/3; Franklin to Emily Fullerton, 15 October 1950, SLV, YMS16247/2/3. See also 'Memoirs', Mary E. Fullerton Papers ca.1800–ca.1946, ML, MSS2342/2.
[51] Franklin to Mabel Singleton, 22 December 1949, ML, MSS364/25/557.
[52] Franklin to Singleton, 3 September 1946, ML, MSS364/25/493-5.
[53] Sylvia Martin, *Passionate Friends: Mary Fullerton, Mabel Singleton and Miles Franklin,* 2nd ed. (Interventions, 2021), 195–98.

the critic Nettie Palmer, Franklin refused to have the text 'dumped on me', ensuring it would never reach publication.[54] Still, the pair agreed, it had historical significance, and Palmer sent 100 copies to friends, libraries and 'women's colleges' across the anglophone world. In the latter task she was assisted by another NWTUL member, the trailblazing historian Mary Ritter Beard, who had previously invited Henry to serve as an Australian representative to her visionary WCWA.[55]

Such qualms did not stop Franklin from making a deeper commitment when the New Zealand-born and north Queensland-based writer Jean Devanny sought help in completing her long-stalled autobiography. Conceived as an exposé of the misogyny and procedural injustice that resulted in her expulsion from the Communist Party – ostensibly for 'sexual immorality' – in 1941, the book had been delayed by Devanny's re-admission in 1943, but more substantially by the party's psychological hold over members.[56] Despite her mistreatment, Devanny struggled to repudiate party life. She resigned in 1950 when her novel of race relations on the turn-of-the-century cane fields, *Cindie* (1949), was deemed to have transgressed the party line, only to rejoin in 1957. Given comrades' hostility to her writing, Franklin's remove prompted Devanny to seek her advice.[57]

During and after writing retreats at Franklin's home in 1948 and 1953, Devanny relied on her friend's counsel as the pair transformed her 'vagrant intention to write her autobiography' into a coherent text.[58] On Franklin's advice, Devanny abridged an unwieldly 160,000-word manuscript, homing in on her activist career. Although she resisted Franklin's bid to stifle her confessional tone, Devanny earnestly followed her structural guidance and, in revisions, included many 'phrases from your letters … as my own'.[59] Such dedication to another writer, Sandra Knowles argues, verged on self-abnegation. Franklin grumbled about Devanny's visits, but her vivid recollections of their conversations in her diaries suggest that she found them invigorating. There she admitted that the work alleviated her loneliness and her anxiety that her late 'writings w[ould] never be either acceptable or esteemed and that I should therefore devote myself to assisting Jean'.[60] Reading Devanny's prose offered respite from her own reluctant autobiography, *Childhood at Brindabella* (1963), and perhaps validated her choice to eschew self-revelation by ending the narrative in 1889, when the downwardly mobile Franklins left her natal 'Eden' at Talbingo for better

[54]Nettie Palmer to Franklin, 6 October 1943, ML, MSS364/24/443; Franklin to Palmer, 6 May 1940 and 19 October 1943, ML, MSS364/24/426, 445; Diane Kirkby, *Alice Henry, the Power of Pen and Voice: The Life of an Australian-American Labor Reformer* (Cambridge University Press, 1991), 216–25; 'Memoirs of Alice Henry', 1944, University of Melbourne Archives (UMA), Melbourne, SPC/AX 920.7 H621.

[55]Palmer to Franklin, 6 October 1943, ML, MSS364/24/443; Palmer to Chief Librarian, University Library, 28 July 1944, in 'Alice Henry', UMA, SPC/AX 920.7 H621; World Centre for Women's Archives to Henry, 5 April 1938, ML, MSS364/117/4/177.

[56]Carole Ferrier, *Jean Devanny: Romantic Revolutionary* (Melbourne University Press, 1999), 185, 216–17, 268; Stuart Macintyre, *The Reds: The Communist Party of Australia from Origins to Illegality* (Allen & Unwin, 1998), 240–43.

[57]Ferrier, *Jean Devanny*, 254, 283–86.

[58]Miles Franklin Notebook Diary no. 1, 1944–29 September 1949, 6 March 1948, ML, MSS364/4/5, 37; Devanny to Franklin, 10 April 1953, in Autobiography Diary no. 2, ML, MSS364/4/6, 58; Pocket Diary 1953, 23 March to 9 April, ML, MSS364/2/46.

[59]Devanny to Franklin, 11 December 1952, 30 January, 17 April, 1 May, 2 and 30 June 1953, ML, MSS364/32/129-33, 145, 149-59; Franklin to Devanny, 14 February 1953, ML, MSS364/32/135; Franklin to Devanny, 20 April 1953, in Autobiography Diary no. 2, ML, MSS364/4/6.

[60]Autobiography Diary no. 2, ML, MSS364/4/6, 59; Knowles, 'Oh, for Some Refuge', 73. See also Franklin Notebook Diary no. 1, ML, MSS364/4/5, 17–121.

prospects in Goulburn.[61] Franklin also moonlighted as Devanny's agent, obtaining literary and legal advice on the manuscript.[62] At Devanny's request, she leveraged her friendship with Beatrice Davis, to have Angus and Robertson – which had, for 20 years, declined Devanny's submissions – consider it for publication.[63] When the 'Old Firm' again rejected Devanny, Franklin not only phoned Davis from her sickbed and secured the text an ill-fated editorial reassessment, but spent her final months seeking alternatives in Australia and beyond.[64]

Like her NWTUL comrade, Mary Ritter Beard, Franklin knew that historians relied on available records to substantiate their writing.[65] Women's omission from collecting institutions, then, exacerbated their exclusion from the entangled pursuits of history-writing and nation-making. Or, as Beard put it: 'Without documents; no history. Without history; no memory. Without memory; no greatness. Without greatness; no development among women'.[66] Yet, unlike nascent women's archives in the United States and Britain, or Australian collectors such as Bessie Rischbieth, who had begun to assemble archives that spanned artefacts, organisational materials, print culture, and ephemera, Franklin had little interest in 'counter archives'; repositories which privilege new 'methods and modes of historical knowledge production', assigning value to the perspectives of those disenfranchised by mainstream historical narratives and, in so doing, emphasise the inadequacies of the dominant archival record.[67] Although, as Janet Lee contends, some critics have mischaracterised Franklin's novels by overlooking their feminist themes and transnational context, such misreadings arose from their author's pursuit of inclusion in the canon created by the nationalist fraternity and its repositories.[68] Such a decision was not only a product of her mutual estrangement from younger feminists, whom she maligned for being insufficiently aware of their forebears and, more unfairly, as misguided in their pursuit of sexual equality.[69] Instead, by coaxing friends to collate conventional materials, such as letters and memoirs, Franklin hoped that their contributions would 'rebalance' the national tradition she had helped fledge.[70] The project – marked by a proleptic sense of loss that, as Clare Hemmings argues, later came to structure

[61] Marjorie Barnard, *Miles Franklin: The Story of a Famous Australian*, 2nd ed. (University of Queensland Press, 1988), 27–28; Miles Franklin, *Childhood at Brindabella: My First Ten Years* (Angus & Robertson, 1963), 151.
[62] Devanny to Franklin, 10 August 1953, ML, MSS364/32/155; Franklin to Devanny, 12 August and 1 September 1953, ML, MSS364/32/161, 169.
[63] Devanny to Franklin, 10 and 26 August 1953, ML, MSS364/32/155, 167; Franklin to Devanny, 12 September 1953, ML, MSS364/32/187; Manuscript report: 'The Killing of Rosamond Lovatt', 8 October 1930, Angus and Robertson archives, MSS314, vol. 28/1/9-11; Manuscript reports: 'Paradise Flow', 21 July 1937, and 'Roll Back the Night', ca.1945, MSS3629, vol. 236/305, 429; Manuscript reports: 'Opportunity Land', 3 November 1948 and 14 April 1949, MSS3629, 1/01/46/1.
[64] Franklin to Devanny, 31 October 1953, 10 March and 31 May 1954, ML, MSS364/32/199, 222, 237; Devanny to Franklin 12 October, 28 October 1953, 8 March, 25 March and 27 May 1954, ML, MSS364/32/193-7, 227-9, 235.
[65] Mary K. Trigg, *Feminism as Life's Work: Four Modern American Women through Two World Wars* (Rutgers University Press, 2014), 44.
[66] Beard to Dorothy Porter, 31 March 1940, in *A Woman Making History: Mary Ritter Beard through her Letters*, ed. Nancy F. Cott (Yale University Press, 1991), 48.
[67] Alana Kumbier, 'Inventing History: The Watermelon Woman and Archive Activism', in *Make Your Own History: Documenting Feminist and Queer Activism in the 21st Century*, ed. Lyz Bly and Kelly Wooten (Litwin Books, 2012), 97–98.
[68] Lee, *Fallen Among Reformers*, 12.
[69] See, for example, Franklin to Mary Fullerton, 16 September 1945, ML, MSS364/19/395-7; Devanny to Franklin, 4 and 9 January 1954, ML, MSS364/32/205-9, 211-13; Franklin to Devanny, 7 January 1954, ML, MSS364/32/215.
[70] Modjeska, *Exiles at Home*, 185.

twentieth-century feminist 'storytelling' – felt urgent for Franklin because her 'few remaining elders' were dying and she feared that they would vanish amid the flux of postwar reconstruction.[71] As Knowles contends of her diaries, Franklin's archival labour allows an opportunity to reconcile her ambiguous public commitment to feminism in Australia with the concerted activism of her years abroad.[72]

Yet, Franklin's correspondence suggests that her project had multiple motivations. Here, the racial animus that peppers her letters should not be minimised, as Jill Roe does in her otherwise admirable biography, as 'unguarded' provocations of her friends' pieties. Although far from universal, especially among her confidants, these sentiments were hardly shocking for one raised amid the totalising atmosphere of the White Australia Policy and who spent her early adulthood among settler progressives in another 'white man's country', the United States.[73] That said, her racism must be considered as a facet of her political identity. Franklin's voluble fears about 'Asia's relentless fecundity' and corresponding pride that the Dominion had 'no huns and wops and dagoes to drag us down' were inheritances from the fin-de-siècle nationalists for whom proximity to Asia and the threat of Central and Southern European 'sojourners' simultaneously defined and imperilled the infant 'structures of national life'.[74] Yet, following organisations like the patriotic Australian Women's National League (1904–44) – which she never joined – if not many male defenders of the 'white nation', Franklin saw women not as 'untrustworthy … betrayers of national promise', but its progenitors.[75] White women's words and voices had shaped a distinct culture and now risked erasure before they had received their due. Franklin was never forthright about the ways that xenophobia shaped her memory activism, but came closest to revealing the vision animating her archival endeavours to Emily Fullerton, in a note written in 1952 as she prepared her papers for deposit:

> No I don't suppose there wd be any letters of mine among Mary's unless Mabel [Singleton] had sent them out, but I just wanted to make sure. You mention the old family by-words. Mary and I used to have lots of fun in exchanging them. That is one of the nice things that will be swamped by the many people of foreign languages coming in. At one time all Australia was like one family.[76]

Threatened thus by 'post-atom [bomb] migration', misunderstood by younger feminists and tolerated – at best – by the nationalist fraternity, for Franklin it was

[71]Franklin to Davis, 19 August 1949, ML, MSS364/38/34/121; Clare Hemmings, *Why Stories Matter: The Political Grammar of Feminist Theory* (Duke University Press, 2011), 3–4, 63–93.
[72]Knowles, 'Oh, for Some Refuge', 66.
[73]Mary Fullerton and Mabel Singleton, for example, opposed the White Australia Policy and the racism that underpinned many of Australia's 'social experiments'. Other friends, such as the American academic Hartley Grattan, forcefully rebutted Franklin's prejudices. Franklin to Grattan, 29 March 1933, ML, MSS364/26/39; Grattan to Franklin, 27 April 1933, ML, MSS364/26/49; Kate Laing, *Sisters in Peace: The Women's International League for Peace and Freedom in Australia, 1915–2015* (ANU Press, 2023), 83–114; Roe, *Stella Miles Franklin*, 429, 508. On 'settler progressivism' and the connections between Australia and the United States, see Marilyn Lake, *Progressive New World: How Settler Colonialism and Transpacific Exchange Shaped American Reform* (Harvard University Press, 2019).
[74]Franklin to Robins, 6 May 1929, in Roe, *My Congenials*, 215; Andonis Piperoglou, '"Dirty Dagoes" Respond: A Transnational History of a Racial Slur', in *Redirecting Ethnic Singularity: Italian Americans and Greek Americans in Conversation*, ed. Yiorgos Anagnostou, Yiorgos Kalgeras and Theodora Patrona (Fordham University Press, 2022), 28–37; David Walker, *Anxious Nation: Australia and the Rise of Asia 1850–1939* (University of Queensland Press, 1999), 231.
[75]Walker, *Anxious Nation*, 101.
[76]Franklin to Emily Fullerton, 28 June 1952, SLV, YMS16247/2/10.

only through state-run collecting institutions that the lexicon and political sensibility of pre-war women could be posthumously rediscovered and rehabilitated while what she imagined as the Australian 'family' remained intact.[77]

Exporting feminist memory

One 'elder' that Miles Franklin did not make archival overtures to was her old friend Vida Goldstein. The pair were well acquainted, having first met in Melbourne in 1903 when Franklin 'posed' as a maid while researching an exposé of the domestic service industry, and several times when they overlapped in London. The Goldsteins introduced Franklin to Christian Science but her refusal to convert disappointed the family. Nevertheless, she remained within their circle for the next half-century.[78] Franklin greatly admired Goldstein. She included her as a thinly fictionalised character in *Some Everyday Folk and Dawn* and, a decade after its publication, numbered her among 'the truest and bravest people I have ever known'. Yet, it seems, Goldstein placed less stock in their friendship. As she jotted apologetically in a rare note decades later, 'it was … one of the many letters I have intended writing you through the years'.[79]

Goldstein's 'retirement' after attending the Zürich Women's Peace Conference in 1919 was a source of uneasy gossip in feminist circles. Goldstein divulged little about her decision, save for asking the Women's Peace Army (WPA) – which she had founded in Melbourne with Cecilia John and the British suffragette Adela Pankhurst – not to book her return passage as she was resigning in despair at the ruin of continental Europe.[80] Although Goldstein, as Franklin told a mutual acquaintance, took a sporadic 'interest in politics', by the 1930s she had retreated from public life.[81] Yet, although it was not apparent to Franklin, Goldstein monitored feminist politics through her 'Suffragette Clan', the coterie of Melbourne activists such as Jennie Baines and Eileen Casey who had served in the WSPU, and whose 'female-centred society' has invited comparisons to the sisterhood invoked by Women's Liberationists.[82] Thus, she understood the need to preserve the materials and memory of feminism's past. Unlike Franklin who, of necessity as a novelist and literary critic, as well as by inclination, bound herself to the nation, Goldstein had despaired of the Dominion's politics even before the WPA's gruelling opposition to the First World War.[83] Further, while Franklin fretted about Anglo-Australia's decline, Goldstein had – inconsistently – grappled with imperialism, racism and the White Australia Policy, even as she struggled to imagine just alternatives.[84] Even the national

[77]Franklin to James, 16 December 1953, ML, MSS364/30/615.
[78]Roe, *Stella Miles Franklin*, 93–98, 104, 114, 130, 180–81, 292, 529; Bomford, *That Dangerous and Persuasive Woman*, 214–17.
[79]Roe, *Stella Miles Franklin*, 104; Franklin to Scott, 28 December 1919, in Roe, *My Congenials*, 142–44; Vida Goldstein to Franklin, 22 December 1947, ML, MSS364/10/139-41. Emphasis in original. For another reading of their relationship, see Bomford, *That Dangerous and Persuasive Woman*, 205–20.
[80]Laing, *Sisters in Peace*, 79–80.
[81]Franklin to Carrie Whelan, 15 August 1934, ML, MSS364/20/293. See, for example, Vida Goldstein, 'The Struggle for Woman Suffrage in Victoria', 27 October 1937, Papers and Objects of Bessie Rischbieth, National Library of Australia (NLA), Canberra, MS2004/4/233.
[82]Vida Goldstein to Edith How-Martyn, ca. February 1948, NLA, MS2004/4/28; Martin, *Passionate Friends*, 52.
[83]See Juliana Spahr on the 'stubborn relationship' between twentieth-century literary production and the nation in *DuBois's Telegram: Literary Resistance and State Containment* (Harvard University Press, 2018).
[84]Laing, *Sisters in Peace*, 49–53, 83–114; Angela Woollacott, *To Try Her Fortune in London: Australian Women, Colonialism, and Modernity* (Oxford University Press, 2001), 39–45.

culture that Franklin revered left her cold. As Goldstein confided to a friend, she had struggled to finish Franklin's 'life of Joseph Furphy', quipping that only a 'devotee … could find any pleasure in it'. 'Miles,' she joked, 'would regard me as a poor Australian.'[85]

Nevertheless, Goldstein understood her contemporaries' concern with their place in the masculinist history of settler Australia. It was with some ambivalence, then, that she declined Bessie Rischbieth's 1946 request to donate her papers to a women's 'library' planned 'on similar lines' to the Women's Service Library established by the London National Society for Women's Suffrage in 1926.[86] She had already accepted a request from British suffragette and Sydney resident Edith How-Martyn to deposit everything she deemed important in the WSL. How-Martyn, the architect of the 'suffragette spirit' memory culture, was a 'zealous' relic hunter who mobilised an international network of suffragettes to post ephemera to London.[87] After an initial gift, in 1943, of a cutting book documenting her first Senate campaign, on Vida's death in 1949 her sister Aileen sent most of what remains from her activist years to Britain: a journal from her North American tour (1902); a diary from the Victorian suffrage campaign's denouement (1908); a scrapbook from her year in Britain in 1911; and a folio of letters written in 1919.[88] Given the collection's brevity and the absence of the candid letters preserved in her contemporaries' collections, it is tempting to assume that Vida's vetting has 'deprived [us] of the more interesting and telling correspondence, letters that would put matters beyond dispute'.[89] Certainly, recent biographers, following some of Goldstein's acquaintances, hint that her possible romance with Cecilia John motivated such discretion.[90] Whatever the nature of their bond, Goldstein's public conformity to 'middle-class norms of cisheterosexual femininity' and private 'queer domestic arrangements' – her rejection of marriage, lifelong cohabitation with her sisters, and strict preference for homosocial company – accord with Wendy Rouse's theorisation of queer suffragists' self-policing as they navigated the bounds of respectability in the United States.[91] Likewise, and in common with Franklin and Rose Scott, without children of her own Goldstein needed to look beyond the conventions of family inheritance to ensure her collection's survival.

What has, since 2002, been called the Women's Library does not retain a provenance file on Goldstein's donation and, characteristically, she offered no explanation. Likewise, she left nothing so revealing as the autobiographies that Franklin cajoled friends to bequeath.[92] Nevertheless, there are clues in her extant materials. Her

[85]Vida Goldstein to How-Martyn, 11 November 1945, NLA, MS2004/4/26.
[86]Vida Goldstein to How-Martyn, 23 December 1946, NLA, MS2004/4/1/27. Goldstein gave Rischbieth a selection of letters and ephemera from the 1920s, but refrained from donating personal papers. These materials can be found at NLA, MS2004/4/1, 6–10.
[87]Mayhall, 'Creating the "Suffragette Spirit"', 242–47; How-Martyn to Vera Douie, 27 and 30 August 1949, Records of the Fawcett Society and its Predecessors, Women's Library, London School of Economics (WL), 2LSW, U/C69.
[88]Papers of Vida Goldstein, WL, 7VDG/01–10; *London and National Society for Women's Service, Report 1943 to 1945* (Women's Printing Society, 1945), 18; Aileen Goldstein to Franklin, 21 December 1949, ML, MSS364/10/71.
[89]Maryanne Dever, 'Greta Garbo's Foot, or Sex, Socks and Letters', *Australian Feminist Studies* 25, no. 63 (2010): 165.
[90]Vida Goldstein to How-Martyn, 23 December 1946, NLA, MS2004/4/1/27. See, for example, Martin, *Passionate Friends*, 50–53; Carolyn Rasmussen, *The Blackburns: Private Lives, Public Ambition* (Melbourne University Press, 2019), 72–73; Danielle Scrimshaw, *She and Her Pretty Friend: The Hidden History of Australian Women Who Love Women* (Ultimo Press, 2023), 50–60.
[91]Rouse, *Public Faces*, 2–12, 37–47.
[92]Bomford, *That Dangerous and Persuasive Woman*, 4–5.

distaste for postwar Australian political life, especially when juxtaposed against her rose-tinted memories of working with the WSPU, likely underpinned her decision. At the time of the bequest, she reminisced with visiting suffragettes like veteran militant Helen Archdale, gathered with her Melbourne 'Suffragette Clan', corresponded with figures such as Frederick and Emmeline Pethick-Lawrence, and joined the Australian branch of the Suffragette Fellowship, a commemorative group established in London in 1926 to sustain a collective suffragette identity. As Eileen Luscombe argues, the sense that shared experience had instilled a duty to preserve material from their emblematic 'fight for freedom' animated How-Martyn and Goldstein's relationship. As Vida confessed in 1944: 'I know no-one [else] here … with whom I can discuss the questions in which you and I are interested'.[93] Goldstein's identification within the militant tradition – aspects of which inflected the WPA's campaigning – was not oxymoronic for a pacifist. Few WSPU members, as Lyndsey Jenkins explains, took violent action, but the collective nevertheless forged an identity 'deepened by the daily business of working for the cause, strengthened by encountering opposition, and sustained by the support of a militant community'.[94]

Beyond these affective bonds, the institutional practices of Australian repositories also conditioned Goldstein's decision. Unlike Franklin's beloved Mitchell, the Public Library of Victoria (PLV) prohibited women from working as qualified librarians until 1926 and appointed few until the 1950s.[95] As such, it lacked custodians such as Ida Leeson or How-Martyn who appreciated women's collections and advocated for their acquisition. Unsurprisingly, and although its grandees insisted that the institution was 'characterised by a comprehensiveness which would stamp it not merely as national, but universal', the library did not hold all of Franklin's novels, let alone consider acquiring material from the suffrage movement.[96] Likewise, Goldstein attended an exhibition of Rischbieth's 'modest' suffragette archive in 1933 and, although her impressions do not survive, she presumably thought better of donating her extant papers.[97] Finally, the Goldsteins were presumably flattered by How-Martyn's enthusiasm and the prestige associated with a library at the heart of British imperial suffragism. Whereas the WSL's officers exulted in the arrival of Goldstein's 'precious' bequest, local commemorations of her passing remained muted.[98] As Aileen feared, a fund established to erect a 'significan[t]' memorial in Vida's name had quickly 'fallen flat'; only 20 years later did its trustees present memorial gifts to the National Library and State Library Victoria.[99]

However, the archive itself, the assemblage that Goldstein chose to represent her activist life, provides more compelling clues about its creator's mnemonic

[93]Vida Goldstein to How-Martyn, 11 November 1945, 12 February, and ca. February 1948, NLA, MS2004/4/26, 28; Luscombe, *History and Legacy of the Suffragette Fellowship*, 157–59; Bomford, *That Dangerous and Persuasive Woman*, 213.
[94]Lyndsey Jenkins, *Sisters and Sisterhood: The Kenney Family, Class, and Suffrage, 1890–1965* (Oxford University Press, 2021), 143–49.
[95]Ana-Maria Traian, 'Isabella Fraser, a Library Pioneer', *State Library Victoria*, 22 August 2023, https://blogs.slv.vic.gov.au/our-stories/isabella-fraser-a-library-pioneer/.
[96]*The Catalogue of the Public Library of Victoria, Vol. I–A to O* (Fergusson and Moore, 1880), xxx; T. Fleming Cooke, *Classified Catalogue of Australiana in the Public Lending Library of Victoria* (Fraser & Jenkinson, 1936), 121, 127.
[97]'Souvenirs of Suffragette Struggle', *Age*, 22 November 1933, 9, http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article203355604; Luscombe, *History and Legacy of the Suffragette Fellowship*, 157, 167.
[98]How-Martyn to Douie, 30 August 1949, WL, 2LSW, U/C69.
[99]Rasmussen, *The Blackburns*, 288–89; Aileen Goldstein to Franklin, 17 December 1950, ML, MSS364/10/79-81.

expatriation. One such trace is a set of photographs pasted at the centre of her 1911 scrapbook, an eclectic collection of autographs, salutations, postcards and souvenirs that WSL librarian Vera Douie deemed the 'treasure' of her donation.[100] While the possibilities of this commonplace genre have yet to be fathomed by Australian historians, scholars elsewhere have stressed scrapbooks' value as personal archives of women's self-construction that captured the emotional landscapes of feminist activism.[101] Goldstein's journal was a manifestation of what Lucy Delap terms 'mosaic feminism', a politics assembled in dialogue, as attested to by the inscriptions, photographs and clippings which crowd its pages.[102] As such, it offers a more intimate document of her transformative year in Britain than her contemporary columns for *Woman Voter*.[103] The journal, organised chronologically with its enclosures neatly displayed, is clearly a repository of memory. However, in an act of self-effacement Goldstein offered none of the diarist's commentary on the experiences captured, including the photographs that she was given during a holiday in Bath, snatched between a series of summer speaking events in London.[104] Taken by Colonel Linley Blathwayt, the images recorded her stay at Eagle House, his Batheaston estate and, since 1908, a working retreat-cum-refuge for suffragettes recuperating from campaign fatigue and the trauma of imprisonment. Blathwayt's wife Emily, and daughter Mary, were WSPU stalwarts, and the family were intimate with the union's charismatic organiser, Annie Kenney, who was present during Goldstein's visit.[105]

More importantly for Goldstein, the Blathwayts had transformed their garden into the 'Suffragettes' Wood', an arboretum honouring militant activists. From the first planting, in 1909, the family collaborated with the WSPU in their project of foregrounding feminist concerns in public space by repurposing their estate as a 'living monument' to the suffrage movement. As Cynthia Hammond describes, each activist 'who visited Eagle House … planted a tree or shrub in her own name, as part of a carefully organised and landscaped space of memory, hope and celebration'.[106] Each planting was accompanied by commemorative rituals: the installation of a plaque, detailing the tree's species alongside the name and deeds of the woman whose activism it represented, and photographs depicting the honoured woman claiming her place in what they envisaged as a 100-year project.[107] Reflecting the WSPU's self-conception – if not its reality – as a classless organisation, the garden had a didactic layout: elite and ordinary women's trees stood together, albeit with

[100] Douie to How-Martyn, 2 November 1949, WL, 2LSW, U/C69.
[101] See, for example, Susan Tucker, Katherine Ott and Patricia P. Buckler, eds., *The Scrapbook in American Life* (Temple University Press, 2006); Ellen Gruber Garvey, *Writing with Scissors: American Scrapbooks from the Civil War to the Harlem Renaissance* (Oxford University Press, 2013), 172–206; Cherish Watton, 'Suffrage Scrapbooks and Emotional Histories of Women's Activism', *Women's History Review* 31, no. 6 (2022): 1028–46. One exception is Paula Jane Byrne, 'Tracing a Female Mind in Late Nineteenth Century Australia: Rose Selwyn', *Genealogy* 7, no. 2 (2023): 1–20.
[102] Lucy Delap, *Feminisms: A Global History* (Pelican, 2020), 20–22.
[103] See, for example, 'Extracts from Miss Goldstein's Letters', *Woman Voter*, 8 September 1911, 1–2, http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article171810649.
[104] 'Mass Meeting in the Albert Hall', *Votes for Women*, 23 June 1911, 630–31; 'Australian Women and Naturalisation Laws', *Votes for Women*, 23 June 1911, 633.
[105] Laura Schwartz, *Feminism and the Servant Problem: Class and Domestic Labour in the Women's Suffrage Movement* (Cambridge University Press, 2019), 36–39.
[106] B.M. Wilmott Dobbie, *A Nest of Suffragettes in Somerset: Eagle House, Batheaston* (Batheaston Society, 1979), 19–21; Cynthia Imogen Hammond, *Architects, Angels, Activists and the City of Bath, 1765–1965: Engaging with Women's Spatial Interventions in Buildings and Landscape* (Ashgate, 2012), 12, 164.
[107] Dobbie, *A Nest of Suffragettes*, 24–25, 45.

Emmeline Pankhurst's cedar occupying its centre.[108] Goldstein planted a holly bush at Eagle House, making her the third of 68 women so commemorated who lived outside the United Kingdom. As with the other honourees, Linley Blathwayt photographed the occasion, but his plates were, presumably, developed after her visit and hence missing from Vida's scrapbook.[109]

Beneath the respectable cloak of bourgeois aesthetics, the Blathwayts' estate, Hammond argues, was one of the period's few purpose-designed feminist landscapes and, as such, it constituted a site of 'spatialized political becoming'.[110] Goldstein's stay at Eagle House and the accompanying evidence of the suffragettes' quotidian solidarity left a deep impression. It is the central event in her 112-page scrapbook, which features inscriptions from the Blathwayts, Kenney and her WSPU comrade Aethel Tollemache, as well as photographs depicting the arboretum, including one showing Kenney, Mary Blathwayt and fellow honourees Laura Ainsworth and Charlotte Marsh gazing across the 'Pankhurst Pond'.[111] Goldstein fringed these images with sprigs souvenired from the spruce Kenney had planted for Henria Williams, who died from injuries sustained during the 'Black Friday' protests of November 1910, thus commemorating her visit and the place she had been afforded within the suffragettes' emotional community.[112]

The Blathwayts' future-focused dedication of space – an extension of the suffragettes' assertion of women's right to the public arena enacted through their street parades and staged violations of 'male-only' spheres, such as the Houses of Parliament – clearly appealed to Goldstein. Thus, it is not a stretch to suggest that, rather than sending her papers to Rischbieth's notional collection or a repository elsewhere in Australia, Goldstein – who lacked Miles Franklin's faith in the national project or more solidly middle-class Rose Scott's sense of familial legacy and close connections to collecting institutions – believed that her legacy would be better served within the collective history stored in a feminist library in Britain.[113] By the late 1940s, the action could be read as a critique of a nation that Goldstein no longer felt her story fit within, encapsulated by her insistence that her papers belonged in London, a decision worth historians' consideration amid the wider reckoning with feminists' archival activism.[114]

Conclusion

Miles Franklin and Vida Goldstein's mnemonic practices were poignant, optimistic and idiosyncratic. Elucidating these stories accords with Sharon Crozier-De Rosa's elaboration of cultural historian Ann Rigney's plea for memory scholars to capture

[108]Hammond, *Architects, Angels, Activists*, 183.
[109]'Vida Goldstein Planting a Holly Tree 1911', Bath & North East Somerset Council, *Bath in Time*, image 17307. Five honourees were born outside the United Kingdom, though only Goldstein, Alice Perkins (US) and Anna Stout (NZ) lived and led activist careers elsewhere. See Dobbie, *A Nest of Suffragettes*, 62–66.
[110]Hammond, *Architects, Angels, Activists*, 20–21.
[111]Vida Goldstein, Album of letters, autographs and photographs, 1911, Goldstein Papers, 1902–19, NLA, M2309, 27–38.
[112]Vida Goldstein, 1911 Album, NLA, M2309, 37; Hammond, *Architects, Angels, Activists*, 183.
[113]Hilda Kean, 'Public Histories of Australian and British Women's Suffrage: Some Comparative Issues', *Public History Review* 14 (2007): 8–9.
[114]See also James Keating, '"Trust the Women": Dora Meeson Coates's Suffrage Banner and the Popular Construction of Australia's Feminist Past in the Late Twentieth Century', *Histoire sociale/Social History* 56, no. 116 (2023): 390.

'the transmission of positive forms of attachment' between generations so that historians might better comprehend the hopeful labour of the archivist.[115] Although their means, ends and imagined audiences diverged, each woman was convinced that their own, and their peers', activism, organising and writing had shared historical meaning. 'Remembering,' they understood, 'required a paper trail.'[116] Their decisions about what to keep and how to preserve the materials fashioned by themselves and women in their networks constituted acts of faith in imagined readers, driven by the desire to provide the materials for us to legitimate women's pasts as we imagine feminist futures: tools, as Franklin discovered on her return to Sydney, that she so desperately lacked.

Read alongside the more systematic labour of Ruby Rich, Bessie Rischbieth and others who later fought to establish a women's collection at the National Library of Australia, they suggest that memory activism was heterogenous. Individuals and organisations seeking to combat what would become understood as women's 'symbolic annihilation' from Australia's histories reckoned with how to accommodate their histories and memories within existing state and national archival structures, the potential of gender-dedicated archives, and the extent to which the nation was the political unit best suited to the transmission of feminist knowledge.[117] For both women, the project had unintended consequences, while the fruits of their labour would not become apparent for decades. Only in 1990, for example, could researchers access reproductions of Goldstein's papers in Australia.[118] As a result, Goldstein's biographers have yet to explore the significance of her archival expatriation, while few have unpacked the possibility within: Clare Wright's analysis of her 1902 travel diary is a signal exception.[119] Further, and again unbeknownst to Goldstein, the Suffragette Wood – perhaps the place where her sense of belonging within a feminist memory culture began – did not see out the century as the Blathwayts intended, but was razed to accommodate a housing estate in 1968.[120]

Miles Franklin's bequest, particularly her horde of correspondence, has transformed twentieth-century histories of feminism and literature. That we know so much about Mary Fullerton, Catherine Helen Spence and the Goldstein family, as well as her many literary contemporaries, is due to Franklin's hatboxes and her belief that their contents deserved a readership in the library that had reinvigorated her writing life. Her vision was often nostalgic – as wistful references to 'the Rose Scott days' in her diaries suggest – but nevertheless falls within what Zora Simic terms a tradition of 'feminist revision', in which women excluded from popular memory star in

[115]Crozier-De Rosa, 'Ruby Rich', 62–74; Ann Rigney, 'Remembering Hope: Transnational Activism beyond the Traumatic', *Memory Studies* 11, no. 3 (2018): 369–70.
[116]Lisa Tetrault, *The Myth of Seneca Falls: Memory and the Women's Suffrage Movement, 1848–1898* (University of North Carolina Press, 2014), 115.
[117]Michelle Caswell, 'Seeing Yourself in History: Community Archives and the Fight against Symbolic Annihilation', *Public Historian* 36, no. 4 (2014): 27. See also Sharon Crozier-De Rosa, 'Fellowship Presentation: Memory Keepers', *National Library of Australia*, https://www.nla.gov.au/stories/video/fellowship-presentation-memory-keepers; Crozier-De Rosa, 'Ruby Rich'.
[118]Keating, 'Trust the Women', 390.
[119]Clare Wright, '"A Splendid Object Lesson": A Transnational Perspective on the Birth of the Australian Nation', *Journal of Women's History* 26, no. 4 (2014): 16–18.
[120]Hammond, *Architects, Angels, Activists*, 165.

alternative histories that refigure masculinist notions of significance.[121] Notwithstanding Rigney's reminder about capturing the transmission of 'positive attachments', it remains important to consider Franklin's insistence on soliciting papers from White women and depositing them in state memory institutions like the Mitchell alongside her racialised anxieties about their place in the postwar Australian firmament.

Likewise, without reiterating crude narratives of feminist failure, it remains clear that Franklin's campaigns for mnemonic justice did not always reach fruition. Despite her encouragement, neither Spence's descendants nor South Australia's collecting institutions have yet viewed her privately held diaries, much less shared them with the public. By experience she knew what historians would later theorise, that 'the history of the archive is a history of loss'.[122] Likewise, Fullerton did not, despite Franklin's earnest prediction and posthumous publicisation, win renown in the world of letters. Nevertheless, because of Franklin's exacting records, her badgering of the PLV to acquire the papers Mabel Singleton remitted to Australia when Mary died, and the Fullerton family's conviction of the significance of their ancestor's writings, the pair's lives are richly described.[123] Finally, Jean Devanny's memoir was a text ahead of its time. Amid the peak of Cold War hysteria but before the 'generative disruption' unleashed by the women's and gay liberation movements, Australia was neither ready for Devanny's unabashedly 'personal politics', manifested in her 'sordid' descriptions of poverty, sexuality and abuse, nor her 'communist rancour'.[124] Thus it languished until 1986, when it was published amid a welter of women's autobiographical writing that complicated the flood of masculinist elegy as members responded to the Communist Party's decline by relitigating the past.[125] 1986 was too late, by far, to challenge the party's hierarchy – as Devanny and Franklin hoped – but not too late to change history.

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[121] See, for example, April 1949, in Brunton, *Diaries of Miles Franklin*, 231; Zora Simic, '"Mrs Street – Now There's a Subject": Historicising Jessie Street', *Australian Feminist Studies* 20, no. 48 (2005): 293.
[122] Susan Margarey, with Barbara Wall, Mary Lyons and Maryan Beams, eds., *Ever Yours, C.H. Spence: Catherine Helen Spence's An Autobiography (1825–1910), Diary (1894), and Some Correspondence (1894–1910)* (Wakefield Press, 2005), 213–15; Antoinette Burton, 'Thinking beyond the Boundaries: Empire, Feminism and the Domains of History', *Social History* 26, no. 1 (2001): 66.
[123] Martin, *Passionate Friends*, iii, 175–80, 197.
[124] Manuscript reports: 'Jean Devanny memoir', 1 October 1953 and 3 March 1955, ML, MSS3629, 1/01/52/1; Leigh Boucher, Michelle Arrow, Barbara Baird and Robert Reynolds, *Personal Politics: Sexuality, Gender and the Remaking of Citizenship in Australia* (Monash University Publishing, 2024), 12–17.
[125] Joy Damousi, *Women Come Rally: Socialism, Communism and Gender in Australia 1890–1955* (Oxford University Press, 1994), 184–210; Carole Ferrier, ed., *Point of Departure: The Autobiography of Jean Devanny* (Brisbane: University of Queensland Press, 1986).

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