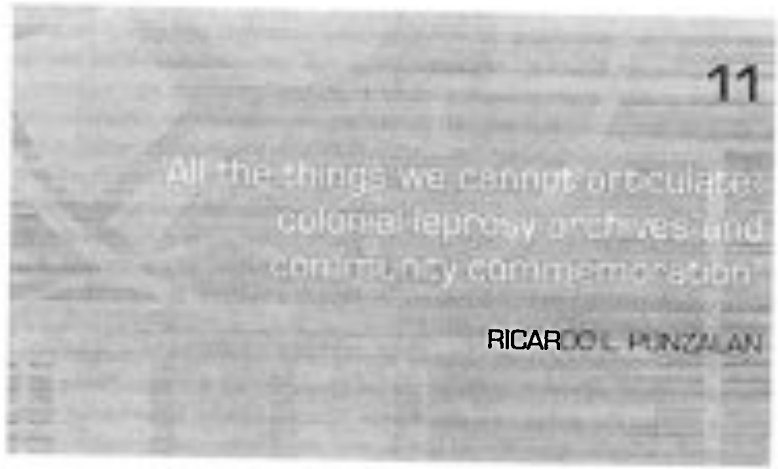

Are there cases in which records contain practical information, but in which the real significance is larger and more symbolic? O'Toole, 1993, 238

Introduction

In recent years archival scholars have pondered the complex association between archives and collective memory (see, for example, Taylor, 1982; Foote, 1990; Brown and Davis-Brown, 1998; Brothman, 2001; Craig, 2002; Schwartz and Cook, 2002; Jimerson, 2003; Piggott, 2005a; Piggott, 2005b; Rosen, 2008). Some have examined this relationship in a critical fashion, emphasizing the inherent problems of the claim while dispelling the almost automatic and often unexamined assertion of their synonymity. Calls for more nuanced characterization of archives' relationship with memory and their communities have gained much attention. Assertions of the archives–memory relationship vary from the critical – 'connecting archives with memory is, of course, in one important respect, misleading' (Harris, 2001, 5; Craig, 2002, 278) – to the convinced – 'Memory, like history, is rooted in archives. Without archives, memory falters, knowledge of accomplishments fades, pride in a shared past dissipates' (Schwartz and Cook, 2002, 18). The various articulations of the problematic contexts and apparent limitations of records, archives and archivists either as evidence, sources, inspiration, shapers or mediators of memory prompt further reflection. They also underscore the need to find more evidence of how archives (as both

social institutions and collections of records), archivists and record-keeping functions might figure in the construction and remembrance of the past by societies, groups or communities.

A few terms have been suggested in the attempt to illustrate this association. Among these are Laura Millar's (2006) 'touchstones' which refers to how records function to trigger memories and the recollection of past events. Margaret Hedstrom uses 'interface', a term often associated with computing technology, to describe the capacity of archivists as intermediaries between documents and their users that 'enable, but also constrain, the interpretation of the past' (Hedstrom, 2002, 22). Similarly, Robert McIntosh puts forward the notion of archival 'authorship' to emphasize the mediating role of archivists in memory creation as they 'practice a politics of memory, a determination of what will be remembered' (McIntosh, 1998, 18). Reflecting on the archival experiences in South Africa in its transition from apartheid to democracy, Verne Harris concludes that records comprise mere 'archival slivers' of the events and processes that they are supposed to embody and reveal. In her discussion of the records of the US Virgin Islands, Jeanette Bastian proposed the notion of a 'community of records', as a framework for understanding the dynamic between archives, memory and community while expanding notions of provenance and ownership of records (Bastian, 2003). 'Memory text' is another concept in the list of ideas that some have used to illustrate the dynamic between archives and community memory. While Bastian and Eric Ketelaar have separately tackled 'memory text', both use the concept to emphasize the need to transcend the limits of traditional archival records and formats to embody cultural performance (Bastian, 2006) and distributed remembering (Ketelaar, 2005).

This paper will not propose yet another term to illustrate the relationship between archives and collective memory. Instead, I wish to account for how this dynamic manifests itself in specific communities within specific moments, or occasions, of public remembering. I shall provide an interpretive discussion of my experiences in organizing the archives on the island of Culion, a former segregation colony for people afflicted with leprosy in the Philippines. The arrival of the first contingent of patients on the island on 27 May 1906 was identified as the community's historical beginning. The project of organizing the archives of Culion was clearly bound up with reflections not only on beginnings, but also on community origins, stirred up by the approaching centennial. The archives thus officially opened at the height of a major public remembrance.

The observations presented in this paper took root during my experiences as archivist and curator of the Culion Leprosy Museum and Archives (CLMA) from April 2005 to May 2006. Using a range of sources (colonial

accounts of the island from existing archival records, personal observations and interviews with people in the community, its local elites, centennial organizers and funding agencies), I wish to describe how one community interpreted the organization of its records and the establishment of archives within the centennial rhetoric of hope and healing and the politics of observance and commemoration. Through this 'thick description' (Geertz, 1973), I show how members of the Culion community came to regard a body of colonial medical records as 'their' archives.

My goal is to provide a case that illustrates how records and the establishment of archives figure at a moment of remembrance and commemoration. I propose to examine an occasion of community remembrance and how archives assume a particular meaning in the process. In my discussion, I focus on how the conduct of the larger Philippine national centennial commemoration coincided with Culion's own centenary and thus became the framework for the remembrance of leprosy, the island and its community. I also identify the key actors in Culion's centennial by placing these in a 'web of interests' of competing and complementary visions and interpretations. I show how the archives were used to support differing claims about the meaning of the past, and I suggest some possibilities as to what allows for competing interpretation and meanings of the Culion archives. In telling the stories Culion residents 'tell themselves about themselves' (Geertz, 1973, 448). I depict a duality of interpretation that divides the insider and the outsider and the way in which this influences the collective understanding of the archives. In my position as an outsider 'expert' archivist, I learned that my vulnerabilities in the community also provided an opportunity to act more as a co-witness in the construction of the collective meaning of archives.

Centennial fever

The current period of Philippine history might be characterized as an era of centennial celebrations memorializing the fateful events of about a century ago, specifically the forming of the nation and the revolution that inspired the country's liberation from Spanish colonial domination.[2] The role of heritage institutions in crafting narratives of national history, representing the colonial experience in exhibitions, and displaying a national identity for the general public has been greatly amplified with the centennial of the Philippine revolution against Spain in 1996, the commemoration of the proclamation of national independence in 1998, and the various centennials that followed.[3] This heightened, state-instigated desire for celebratory commemoration of colonialism and nationhood may be described as centennial fever. The centennial fever has indeed engulfed the nation, inspiring various sectors and

institutions to situate their centenaries as points of reckoning, as key moments of collective reflection, affirmation and celebration of heritage and identity.[4]

The hospital on the island of Culion, established in 1906, is yet another important site that recently marked its own centennial.[5] The facility was at one point the world's largest leper colony, primarily because of an American colonial legislation that mandated segregation and literally criminalized leprosy.[6] Given its patient population, budget appropriation and modern hospital infrastructure and facilities, Culion was regarded as among the leading institutions in leprosy research and experimental treatments in the 1920s. This prominence attracted the world's leading leprologists to the island (Carpenter, 1926, 178). Numerous accounts claimed that the island supplied the largest number of patients who were depicted to be willing volunteers of various experimental treatments.[7] The compulsory segregation of lepers was an American colonial legacy that remained decades after the colonial era came to an end. Culion is no longer a segregation colony but a municipality populated largely by former patients and their second- or third-generation descendants. In Philippine contemporary memory, Culion still connotes affliction and banishment to an 'island of no return'. It also gained a more sinister reputation as an 'island of the living dead'.

Among the highlights of Culion's centennial commemoration in 2006 was the inauguration of a leprosy archives and museum, one of the few existing in the world. Asked about the significance of the archives at the centennial, one doctor responded, 'It will be our ultimate homage. The archives will be both a testament and a monument to the dedicated doctors, nurses and the religious, numerous volunteers whose personal sacrifices transformed this inaccessible island into a shelter for lepers. This is also a remembrance to the early settlers of this island who chose to make this land their home.'[8] The chair of the centennial celebrations, an influential doctor on the island, described the importance of the records: 'These are remnants of our past. While those records may seem outdated, they mean something powerful. But I cannot explain why they are powerful. For now, the archives is the symbol of all the things we cannot articulate about our past, about our need to heal in the present and about our desire to foresee a great future.' These statements made clear that the referent for Culion's centenary was the national centennial commemorations of the revolution.

Visible acts of state remembrance of identifying heroes and pioneers, homage and testimony, and monuments and statues served as the example that the Culion community emulated. In 'Symbiotic Commemoration', cultural historian Carolyn Strange illustrates how the remaining residents of Kaluapapa in the island of Molokai, also a former leprosy segregation site,

negotiate with the 'state's framing of the past' (Strange, 2004, 87). Using the characteristically responsive and adaptive biological model of symbiotic organisms, Strange depicts how contemporary Kaluapapans 'selectively incorporated, adapted to and externally generated representations of the past' (Strange, 2004, 89). As an interpretive community, Culion manifests its understanding and interpretation of the past not by wholly incorporating grand state narratives, but by using them to frame their commemoration and remembrance of their local history within broader narratives.

A web of interests

The often competing, sometimes complementing, entities and interests under the commemorative mode of the centennial fever served as the backdrop for the community to understand its archives. The creation of the Culion archives occurred within a web of overlapping contexts and values: the foreign benefactor providing financial assistance; the hospital bureaucracy that claimed ownership of the records; the archivist who is not a member of the community rendering expertise on how the records could be kept, organized and preserved; and the municipal government composed of public officials who were struggling against the sanitarium to exercise greater influence over the community. Planning for the Culion centennial took place within this web of 'interest groups', all aiming to achieve various missions, visions, programmes and agendas that mediated the establishment of the archives.

Most prominent among these was a Japanese humanitarian foundation that funded community aid, livelihood projects and campaigns for the eradication of leprosy and its stigma across the globe. It also provided funding for the establishment of leprosy museums and archives not only in Culion, but in other developing countries such as India and China. Stories of Japanese atrocities in Culion during World War II were alive in the collective consciousness of the community. Mere mention of 'the Pacific war' elicited memories of starvation, hardship, torture and death, especially among the elderly who survived those onerous years. As one senior resident recalled, 'I was a boy during the war. Many patients died of hunger and disease because the Japanese cordoned off the island knowing that American doctors worked here. Food and medicine did not come. Now they're back to help. Perhaps because they're trying to correct past wrongs.' Thus, actions of the humanitarian agency were largely seen as a gesture of restitution despite the fact that its motivation had nothing to do with the Pacific war. Japanese aid to the community was willingly accepted, appreciated and never turned away but this was not without any recollections of the painful war. The attitude of

many was, therefore, largely oblivious to the foundation's altruistic mission as the act of giving was almost automatically interpreted as some form of compensation for an irrevocable and overdue debt.

The municipal government and hospital administration occasionally clashed over authority and influence in the community. The elected municipal officials saw the centennial as a moment to assert a new era of public governance and independence from the hospital administration that had influenced the island since its establishment as a leper colony. When Culion was declared a local government unit in 1992, the former seat of the leper colony, the sanitarium, was reclassified as a regional hospital. The newly formed local government saw the centennial as the celebration of its own history of transformation and empowerment and thus saw itself as the chief organizer of the commemoration. This differing conceptualization of influence and control between the local government and the sanitarium was manifested through their conflicting debates over the interpretation and administration of the centennial activities and the ownership of the archives. According to one elected official, 'Why call it "the Culion" Museum and Archives if it will be owned by the hospital and not by the municipality and managed through the elected people of the community? Maybe they should call it "the sanitarium" museum since it is obvious that the doctors want control over it.'

I came to the island as an outsider, the 'expert' consultant archivist to organize the records through the initiative of the hospital and largely funded by the Japanese foundation. In a diary entry for November 2005, I wrote, 'It is obvious that people are monitoring what I'm doing from a distance. After months of work in the island, some started to be more comfortable in expressing some of their thoughts about why I am here: my work in the archives and the exhibition. One even asked if I intend to seek help from the municipal government.' At that point, I was not aware of the ongoing tension between the hospital and the local government. It was only weeks before the archives opened (in May 2006) that I realized the conflict. In my diary for May 2006 I wrote,

> I observed that elected officials did not come to the opening. The [Japanese] Foundation representatives were there. The Department of Health representatives were there. The Catholic nuns and parish priest were there. More importantly many from the 'community' were there. From my conversation with [a clerk from the municipal office], I was told that she did not expect the local government officials to be there given the contention over who owned the records.

A community like no other

At the height of the American occupation of the Philippines (1898–1904), there were about 126,000 American soldiers stationed throughout the islands (Gillett, 1990). The possibility of soldiers contracting leprosy and subsequently bringing the disease with them into the mainland US was among the concerns that deeply disturbed the colonial bureaucracy. Leprosy was probably the most dreaded of all tropical diseases, perpetually feared for possible importation to central North America from some largely unknown, primitive and foreign land. Cholera (Rosenberg, 1967), influenza and tuberculosis may have continually plagued the US in this era, but leprosy was regarded as a biblical and medieval disease that was no longer present in the 'civilized' western world. While there were leper colonies in the US, they were located in the island of Molokai, Hawaii and the fairly isolated town of Carville, Louisiana: places regarded as relatively recent colonial possessions. As historian Michelle Moran argues, leprosy was a 'foreign menace' located in what 'Americans imagined as primitive places' that perpetually threatened to invade the mainland (Moran, 2007, 5).

The American presence in the islands was in part justified through the rhetoric of health and sanitation, with leper segregation in Culion as the ultimate embodiment of colonial success. According to early 20th century American geographer and travel writer Frank G. Carpenter, 'I have heard it said that even if we had failed in all else here in the Philippines, what we have done in Culion would justify the American occupation' (Carpenter, 1926, 178). With its policy of 'benevolent assimilation',[9] many regarded the US as different from other colonial orders in the tropics, such as the Spanish who pursued conquest for their material gain and neglected the welfare of the Filipinos. This view was expressed in a 1901 essay by L. Mervin Maus, MD, first Director of the Board of Health, entitled 'The Sanitary Conquest of the Philippine Islands': 'The watchword of American activity in Cuba and the Philippines was "Cleanliness", and in our fight against diseases and sanitary conditions all rancor of battle and strife was lost' (Maus, 1912, 1017). For Maus, US conquest was justified by a moral imperative and was best implemented through sanitary policies that brought about 'priceless victories over tropical diseases and conditions which for centuries had hovered over those favored isles of the southern seas as angels of death, and converted them into a charnel house both for native and foreign born' (Maus, 1912, 1017).

Culion is a community bound by its association with disease and segregation. Past practices of forced isolation produced a population with an ethnic makeup unique from other communities of the Philippines. Culion was assembled through a series of countrywide expeditions, or 'leper collections' as they were described in various reports, that rounded up

individuals suspected of having leprosy. A majority of the present-day inhabitants of the island – numbering about 20,000 – can directly trace their lineage to former patients, if are not former patients themselves. Others link their roots to the pioneer doctors, nurses, staff or administrators of the former leprosarium. Segregation thus created a community that comprised a diverse array of cultural and ethno-linguistic groups from the various regions of the Philippines.

The colonial policy on compulsory medical segregation from 1906 to 1952 produced a community like no other in the Philippines. As a form of social classification, forced segregation identified a population not by its kinship, ethnicities, region or other cultural affinities, but by its medical and health conditions. Segregation on Culion island gathered Filipinos from various regions and ethno-linguistic communities on the basis of a disease: as lepers who were taken from their homes and families based on a state-sponsored medical programme. Culion was often referred to as a microcosm of the Philippines: a site not only dedicated to leprosy treatment or cure, but a social laboratory where notions of citizenship and civic duties were inculcated in a population. Historian Warwick Anderson describes this as 'biomedical citizenship', a medically oriented approach to identity and social labelling (Anderson, 2006).

The implementation of sanitation and segregation policies tells at least as much about colonial thought as it does about the administration of public health. The segregation of lepers was not only an attempt to contain the disease physically, but also metaphorically confirmed the prevailing values of public health at the time. As anthropologist Mary Douglas argues about the relationship of cleanliness with order, 'dirt is essentially disorder . . . [and] exists in the eye of the beholder . . . In chasing dirt, in papering, decorating, tidying, we are not governed by anxiety to escape disease, but are positively re-ordering our environment, making it conform to an idea' (Douglas, 2002, 2).

Active segregation embodied American ideas of modern, sanitary science of the early 20th century. The colonial Bureau of Health, for instance, once declared: 'The difference between an ordinary barrio and a sanitary barrio is the difference between order and chaos' (Bureau of Health, 1911, 21). This approach promoted personal hygiene, environmental sanitation and combinations of medical treatment practices as the solution to a plethora of public health concerns. The emerging field of 'tropical medicine' was largely organized within these ideas. At first concerned with the survival of the white race in the new colonial possessions, it gradually moved its focus to investigate the immunities and vulnerabilities of the natives. Practices of quarantine and segregation were rooted in, and at the same time reinforced, the prevailing belief in the first half of the 20th century that diseases were

mainly caused by the exposure of vulnerable hosts to filthy and unclean environments.

The segregation of people with leprosy created a social taxonomic system that is not only conceptual but also grounded in actual practice.[10] Colonial health and sanitation policies are widely recognized as one of the techno-scientific mechanisms exercised by the colonial state on a population in order for them to be monitored, dominated and controlled. As sociologist Nikolas Rose notes: 'To differentiate is to classify, to segregate, to locate persons and groups under one system of authority and to divide them from those placed under another. Placing persons and populations under a medical mandate – in the asylum, in the clinic, in an urban space gridded by medical norms – exposes them to scrutiny, to documentation and to description in medical terms' (Rose, 1995, 58). In the case of Culion, the bureaucratic act of documentation produced innumerable files and data that became the basis of colonial knowledge and administration. Thus, as historian Penelope Papailias observes, 'archival categories and conventions' always reveal 'imprints of governance, traces of imperial imaginaries, and products of discourses and technologies of documentation (statistics, demography, ethnology, law, etc.) marshaled by the state to describe, manage, and rule various 'problematic' populations' (Papailias, 2005, 7–8). In this sense, archives become prospective subjects, sites of knowledge production suitable for ethnographic inquiry (Stoler, 2002).

Records as control, archives as remembrance

'Colonial administrators', anthropologist Ann Laura Stoler remarked in her most recent book, 'were prolific producers of categories' (Stoler, 2009, 1). In the era of leper segregation, various records were systematically created and used in the imposition of social exclusion as well as physical segregation. The Segregation Law of 1907 (Act No. 1711, 1907) offered a legal mandate that effectively criminalized leprosy, a view that is inscribed and embodied by the voluminous records, and the categories that they contain, that were produced and utilized for the purpose of documenting and classifying the people in the island. The records in the archives of Culion thus bear old categories used in classifying and documenting the segregated patients of the former colony, tangible remnants of the intangible past, of colonial practices and ideas. In their individual record, patients were referred to as 'inmate', and any subsequent release from the facility was termed a 'pardon'. The moment a patient was admitted in the island, his or her name, age and place of origin was entered in the Patient Registry, which also tracked down their status as either pardoned, escaped or dead. A separate registry was in use for children

born of leprous parents who were immediately segregated from their parents and brought to a nursery, and later on, adoption. Information was recorded about every patient on the island in regular bacteriological reports; gratuity cards recorded the small allowances they received from the government in exchange for their mandatory labour; and when a patient died a necropsy report was made.

Visual records are perhaps the most 'visible' remnants of the leper segregation era in the archives of Culion. Photographs of patients were taken before and after they received experimental chaulmoogra oil-based treatments (Figure 11.1). Silent films and photography were also circulated within the medical field to provide a visual index of the various manifestations and stages of leprosy in the body. Visual records were made with the intent of being distributed as campaign materials – images showing the day-to-day affairs of the colony and its modern treatment facilities, the various leisure and social activities, and the clean and orderly community where the lepers were happy and free. Such images represent the island as an

Figure 11.1 Photographs illustrating the before and after treatment of an unknown female patient taken in the 1920s; papules present on the patient's arms (left) were almost completely eradicated after a series of chaulmoogra oil injections (right) (courtesy of the Culion Leprosy Museum and Archives)

idealized 'haven' for lepers. In his memoir, Victor G. Heiser, then Chief Quarantine Officer and later Director of Health of the Philippines, proudly revealed, 'I wanted to popularize Culion so that the lepers who were at large would come there willingly. I had photographs taken of the colony, and even moving picture reels made, a great achievement in those days, showing how attractive it was' (Heiser, 1936, 230).

Canadian archival thinker Hugh Taylor once argued in favour of the necessity to understand records, especially during their active lives, as powerful 'instruments' or tools used in the conduct of bureaucratic affairs and social relationships. 'Our documents', he contends, 'have, in one way or another, made an impact on the lives of people to whom they were directed' (Taylor, 1995, 9–10). Recording and record keeping were embedded in socio-medical practice that controlled people's lives and mobility on Culion. Records were more involved in ensuring the seamless implementation of segregation than simply passive containers of data. From each patient's arrival at the colony until their death or 'parole', all forms of records were used to document and monitor their status and condition. Records not only recorded but inexorably defined the communities for which they were created.

Records served the goals of mandatory isolation. In this light, I argue that records have a rather precarious relationship with the community that they were meant to document and regulate. Created and consumed by the old colonial institutions of public health and medicine, documents were inextricably connected not only to their makers, but also to the population that they classified, labelled or described. Moreover, the current generation, which desires to come to terms with its past, has revived its connection to these surviving documentary artefacts.

Culion's leprosy archives now assumes two simultaneous functions: first, as evidence and former tools of community dismemberment and segregation by a former colonial regime; and second, as the embodiment of the archives' newly acquired and contemporary purpose as the symbol of community heritage and a common collective past. The transformation of a body of forgotten records into archives enabled a collection of documents, the very evidence of segregation and colonial control, to become the tangible manifestation of community heritage and identity. The archives of communities like Culion, with histories of isolation, displacement and segregation, can help us to better understand the nature of records; moreover, they offer a point of reflection to think about the function of archives in collective commemoration and remembrance.

Archives and the affirmation of community memory

According to one sanitarium employee who was born to former patients of the leprosarium: 'What's a centennial without a monument to erect? The Philippine centennial was about the statues of our national heroes. Since the whole island is already a monument, we are erecting a museum full of records about our ancestors who are our heroes.' Archives are among those 'boundary stones of another age, illusions of eternity' identified by the French historian Pierre Nora as *les lieux de mémoire* – sites that are 'fundamentally remains, the ultimate embodiments of a memorial consciousness' (Nora, 1989, 12).

Reflecting on the work of establishing the archives of Culion, the administration and application of archival rules and processes, I noted a kind of ritualistic performance that rendered and symbolically transformed a body of records into archives. This transformation begins when an archivist enters the community to organize records, and culminates in the inauguration of the collection as archives. Somewhere between its nascent beginnings in a roomful of 'old' papers and its inauguration during the centennial commemoration as 'the archives', the Culion community observed and interpreted the actions implemented and applied on this body of documentary artefacts as constituting a set of legitimating practice. When I asked one schoolteacher what she thought about the archives, she replied:

> Since I was a child, I was aware that the old laboratory [now the archives building] had old documents, papers left behind by the American doctors. Now they are neatly organized in boxes and carefully arranged. I never realized their importance until I saw how meticulously they were cared for and handled for the centennial. It is embarrassing to realize that I did not know then that our heritage was in those papers.

In her eyes, archival acts of arranging, boxing, labelling and exhibiting rendered the dormant records into meaningful archives that embodied heritage and identity. 'We are glad that we now have people helping us bring the needed expertise to transform our paper scraps into archives,' said one doctor on the eve of the centennial. This statement perhaps best represents the prevailing idea among the community that a professional archivist has the legitimate power of transforming documents into archives.

Though far removed from the actual act and experience of compulsory isolation, the records in the archives of Culion are remnants of the past practices of segregation. As members of the community internalize the centennial message that spoke of healing and closing the darkest chapter of their history, they chose to refashion and reinterpret the records in the archives in agreement with the rhetoric that dominated the centennial

commemoration. According to Yael Zerubavel: 'The performance of commemorative rituals allows participants not only to revive and affirm older memories of the past but also to modify them' (Zerubavel, 1995, 5–6). If there was a period in time that could be regarded as the moment that transformed the meaning of leprosy records from remnants of a bygone era towards an attitude of respect for artefacts of heritage and identity, it would be Culion's centennial commemoration in May 2006. From their dormant status as papers bundled and wrapped to be forever forgotten in storage, the Culion Leper Colony records became the centre of attention for a community seeking for something tangible that could articulate and embody its collective heritage and symbolize its hundred years of existence. In this moment of heightened sensitivity and search for meaning, the community repurposed the records of leprosy into archives.

What makes it possible for a community to collectively embrace remnants of an oppressive colonial past as its heritage and identity? Interpreting the fate of the archives of Hawaiian hula and its relationship with contemporary hula performance, ethnomusicologist Amy Stillman, quoting Antze and Lambek (1996, xi–xxxviii), underscores the relationship between memory and the construction of identity: 'Memory serves as both a phenomenological ground of identity (as we know implicitly who we are and the circumstances that have made us so) and the means for explicit identity construction (as when we search our memories in order to understand ourselves or when we offer particular stories about ourselves in order to make a certain kind of impression)' (Stillman, 2001, 188). For Stillman, archival sources of the hula comprise a poetics 'dismembered' from its contemporary performance. Dismemberment here means the dislocation of textual evidence from actual performance of the hula as a ritual and as an embodied act of cultural memory.

The act of archiving and keeping of records in institutional repositories consequently limits the presence of documents in the outside world. In a similar vein, the records kept in archives become so far removed from the utilitarian transactions and day-to-day lives of the people that they acquire a different status in the collective imagination. Archives then become fertile ground for the interpretation and inscription of symbolic meaning. Historian Antoinette Burton has argued that 'we must concede the fundamental liminality of the archive: its porousness, its permeability, and the messiness of all history that is made by and from it. We might even think of it as a kind of "third space": neither primary nor secondary because it participates in, and helps to create, several levels of interpretive possibility at once' (Burton, 2003, 26).

Culion taught me to understand archives not as mere collections of documentary artefacts, but as a storehouse for and affirmation of community

memory where the archivist facilitates as mediator, but not the final arbiter, of evidence and remembrance. Reflecting on the recent calls for archivists to recontextualize and be 'self-conscious' about the interpretive aspects of their work – such as appraisal, arrangement, description and exhibitions (Hedstrom, 2002; Yakel, 2003; Nesmith, 2005) – I came to realize the role of archives in collective remembrance and representation. In this context, the challenge is to understand how a community perceives archives and how it comes to terms with the documentation of its past. I argue that by renaming records as archives within the context of commemoration, archivists mediate the production of collective memory – the realm of selective remembering or forgetting and the affirmation of community identity.

Co-witnessing: becoming a 'vulnerable archivist'

Records, according to Wendy Duff and Verne Harris, are

> always in the process of being made . . . 'their' stories are never ending, and . . . the stories of those who are conventionally called records creators, records managers, archivists, users and so on are (shifting, intermingling) parts of bigger stories understandable only in the ever-changing broader contexts of society.
>
> Duff and Harris, 2002, 265

In the context of a commemorative event, practices of representation and commemoration are largely mediated by the decisions made by a few members of the community, the elite who assume the representative voice for the rest of the community. As Laura Millar observes, 'if social memory is forged and refashioned through a process of pick and choose, then the vehicles of memory will be subject to the inevitable partiality and bias of those in society with the power to do the picking and choosing' (Millar, 2006). The irony in the creation of Culion's archives was that the path towards constructing the archives of this displaced and segregated post-colonial community is through the decisions made by archivists, leaders of the community and funding agencies.

I am inspired by anthropologist Ruth Behar's notion of the vulnerable observer, which emphasizes that field researchers cannot be absolutely objective as they both shape and are shaped by their research encounters (Behar, 1997). Similarly, archival work in Culion was a rare opportunity to be a 'vulnerable archivist': to experience and witness how a community comes to terms with its past by repurposing its archives. Vulnerability also helped me to understand my own position as part of a larger web of interests that both limits and influences the interpretation of archives.

It was obvious that there was an outsider/insider divide that was operating in Culion at the time of its centennial and beyond. Perhaps nothing best exemplifies this than the stark difference in the narratives about the meaning of the seal of the Philippine Health Service. This seal is prominently displayed on a high slope of the island and is particularly visible when approaching Culion from the sea (Figure 11.2). Outsiders, mainly reporters, tourists and even academics normally interpreted this as a warning for those approaching the island that they were entering the dreaded leper colony. The seal, built in 1926 to commemorate the colony's 20th anniversary, was in fact made of coral stones carried to the edge of the mountain and constructed by the patients themselves. For residents of Culion, the seal was a testament to the achievements of their ancestral predecessors, a triumph of the human spirit to overcome the most deforming and debilitating of all diseases. For the community today, the seal is not a mark of fear or stigma, but symbolizes hope and pride.

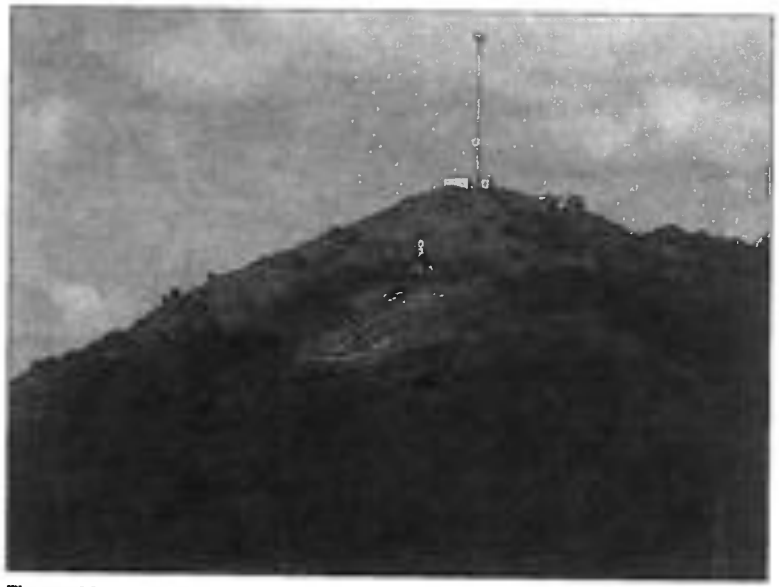

Figure 11.2 Built in 1926 by the patients themselves, the seal of the Philippine Health Service – also known in Culion as 'Aguila' or Eagle – is a prominent landmark seen when approaching the island from the sea

Another contrast between outsider interpretation and the insider narrative is the notion of the island as a site of banishment versus a shelter for the patients. Early accounts of segregation produced numerous reports of the most unwilling patients being forcibly taken into the island. However, there have been instances of voluntary segregation, and stories of those who found the island a haven where patients could be free to be themselves without fear of humiliation and stigma also abound. The current generation understands the island to be a shelter.

This was apparent from the centennial motto (Figure 11.3), prominently painted on walls near the hospital entrance: 'Culion: Nurtured and Blessed for a Hundred Years; Yesterday a Shelter; Today Hope and Unity; Tomorrow Stability and Prosperity'.[11] From a reputation of being diseased, desperate and debilitated, the current generation emphasizes their ancestors' exercise of agency through labour and being able to take control of their environment. Patients were usually depicted as deteriorating, degrading and dying by the outside world. But for the community, the presence of structures still standing on the island built through compulsory labour, attests to the fact that

Figure 11.3 The centennial motto was written in Filipino on a wall leading to the hospital entrance; it reads 'Culion: Nurtured and Blessed for a Hundred Years; Yesterday a Shelter; Today Hope and Unity; Tomorrow Stability and Prosperity'

not all patients in Culion were brought there to die. Many lived almost normal lives, got married, had children, and were productive citizens who contributed to the development of the community.

Although everyone agreed on the importance of Culion's records, outsiders and community members understood their meanings through different interpretive frames. As an outsider specialist, my difficulty lay in the irony that our project was to 'bestow' a heritage status on a body of hospital records that documented the bodies of those who had been incarcerated under the Segregation Law. These records were conduits to the isolation of individuals and documented a mechanism of subjugation and control based on colonial medico-scientific knowledge. However, many in the community understood these records as the only evidence of their departed descendants and predecessors, the ancestral lineage for much of their community. 'I opened one of the boxes', said one respondent, 'and saw the old Gratuity Cards. I immediately searched for [my uncle's name] but I did not see it. But I saw another name [of a family that] still resides in this island. I immediately went to tell them about my discovery. It made me happy.' Most of the records provided the only remaining traces and proofs of the existence of people otherwise unknown to have existed who were in danger of being forever forgotten given their marginal status. Thus, the record's legacy of colonial society did not inhere in the community's prevailing narrative – the 'story they tell themselves about themselves' – about what the archives kept (Geertz, 1973, 448). As Liam Buckley observes, 'In the archive, colonial categories continue to work at shaping social relations even though the world outside is living in the time of independence' (Buckley, 2005, 255).

'All the things we cannot articulate . . . '

Two views of archives seem to be most prominent. On the one hand, archives are sources of evidence about the past suitable to be harvested or mined by historians and other arbiters of knowledge about the past. On the other hand, there are an increasing number of claims that archives are the embodiment of and repository for society's collective memory. Perhaps now is the time to establish a rapprochement between these two viewpoints and reflect on how archivists could respond to the needs of both popular memory and history in various contexts and profound ways. We can begin by acknowledging that we could serve both memory and history and that both have equal importance to communities that we all serve. In this regard, historian of American slavery Ira Berlin provides a compelling argument about the interdependence of history and memory:

> [T]hey desperately need one another. . . . If memory is denied and history is allowed to trump memory, the past becomes irrelevant to the lives of all. . . . But if history is denied and memory is allowed to trump history, then the past becomes merely a reflection of the present with no real purpose other than wish fulfillment or, at best, myth with footnotes: a source of great satisfaction to some, but of little weight beyond assertion. . . . Indeed, only by testing memory against history's truths and infusing history into memory's passions can such a collective past be embraced, legitimated, and sustained. And perhaps . . . by incorporating . . . memory into . . . history and vice versa . . . [we] can have a past that is both memorable and, at last, past. Berlin, 2004, 50–1

Brien Brothman suggests two types of archivists that echo the memory and history relationship: 'history's archivist' and 'memory's archivist'. History's archivist is primarily concerned with 'finding records and, in them uncovering evidence to develop a linear narrative about a past. . . . Memory's archivist is interested in the past's residue as material promoting integrated knowledge, social identity, and the formation of group consciousness' (Brothman, 2001, 62). If we consider archives a set of records adopted by the community as their own, it will be helpful to account the meanings and values that people ascribe to archives and the context for which these values are employed. Once more, archivists are challenged to be more self-reflective and to account for their decisions. Archivists should view their actions as 'co-witnessing' and not only as expert authors in the construction of archives as heritage and collective memory of a community. We make archives more meaningful by being aware that, as we perform archival tasks, we participate in, and to some extent mediate, the communal re-membrance of the past.

Whenever we perform our mediating functions on records, we ourselves become the 'interface' (Hedstrom, 2002) between the past embodied in archives and the community who access them. I would say that while I satisfied the perceived need for expertise to transform records into archives in the eyes of many in the community, my role was more an element within a larger commemorative ritual of what historian and geographer Kenneth Foote characterized as 'sanctification', or the process by which something is erected and designated as a memorial site (Foote, 1990, 387). In the case of Culion, the designation of a body of colonial medical records into archives constitutes an act of memorialization. Understanding this relative position of archives in commemoration helps us situate the limited place of archives and archivists in collective memory. In the contemporary and memorializing function of Culion's colonial archives, the records are collectively repurposed to embody contemporary desires and aspirations regardless of their actual contents and what they documented. Archives in Culion were 'touchstones'

(Millar, 2006) not only because they evoked memory, but also because, to repeat my earlier quote from one doctor, they were used as tangible representations of 'all the things we cannot articulate about our past, about our need to heal in the present and about our desire to foresee a great future'.

Notes

1 The term 'leper' has been widely recognized as stigmatizing and because of this it is advocated that its use be discontinued. My use of the term is mainly to recreate past perspectives and conditions associated with the disease but not to endorse them. Ideas for this paper were first articulated at the Fourth International Conference on the History of Records and Archives (ICHORA 4), 3–5 August 2008, Perth, Western Australia. I am grateful to Jo Robertson of the Global Project on the History of Leprosy (www.leprosyhistory.org) at Oxford University for introducing me to Culion and for inspiring me to embark on this research. I have tremendously benefited from the insightful conversations and comments from my mentors, colleagues and friends at the University of Michigan School of Information, particularly my adviser Margaret Hedstrom as well as David Wallace, Anthea Josias, Trond Jacobsen and members of the interdisciplinary workshop on Archives and Collective Memory. Thanks to Fatma Müge Göçek, whose course on culture, memory and history provided much encouragement. I owe special thanks to Jesse Johnston for the many hours spent patiently listening to my ideas for this paper.

2 This period also saw the transfer of colonial powers from Spanish to American. The years surrounding 1898 are significant in Philippine history as they mark the transition from one colonial government to another. Filipinos hailed their victorious revolution against 333 years of Spanish rule, the US entered into an agreement with Spain to purchase and annex the islands through the Treaty of Paris in 1898. Thus, although 1898 marks the year when the Spanish colonial regime ended in the country, it is also the moment when the US commenced its 48-year occupation of the islands.

3 Such as the Philippine-American War of 1899 to 1902; see A. Velasco Shaw and L. H. Francia (eds) (2002) *Vestiges of War: the Philippine-American War and the aftermath of an imperial dream, 1899–1999*, NYU Press.

4 Following America's annexation of the Philippines, numerous agencies were created to implement programmes for public health and sanitation, which also upheld modern and scientific ideals of their time. These institutions have commemorated their centenaries over the last decade. With these commemorations, the demand to organize and preserve the records of communities organized under colonial sponsorship has grown. Archives in commemorations seem to have acquired a special status as material evidence supporting the symbolic justification of claims of long historical roots as well as the embodiment of collective memory and identity.

5 The American colonial administration of the Philippines identified the island of Culion as a segregation facility in 1901. Construction of the hospital and other facilities began in 1902, but it was only in 1906 that the patients started to be segregated on the island.

6 Leper segregation was justified under the Segregation Law of 1907 entitled An Act Providing for the Apprehension, Detention, Segregation, and Treatment of Lepers in Philippine Islands (Act No. 1711). It is evident that the edict was directed towards subjugating a particular population to a regime of the combined practice of incarceration and cure, precisely expressed in its title: 'apprehension, detention, segregation, and treatment'. At that time, however, no cure for leprosy was known. Thus, treatment was something that the law on its inception could never attain, even if rigorously executed.

7 Senate Committee on Territories and Insular Possessions and House Committee on Insular Affairs, *Leprosy in the Philippine Islands: joint hearings on S. 5434 and H.R. 16618*, 99th Cong., 2nd sess., 15 February 1927, 15. As indicated in the statements made by Capt Gottfried W. Spoerry of the US Army during the US Congressional hearing in 1927: 'Then why not go to Culion? We will go there because it is the largest leper colony in the world, many times over. . . . So that is the reason for choosing Culion, they are there in large numbers – 12,000 in the islands and 5,600 already segregated who would welcome anything that will grant them relief.'

8 This and other subsequent quotes were taken from the transcripts of interviews I conducted on the island and from my field journal made between April 2005 and May 2006.

9 In order to justify America's annexation of the Philippines, US President William McKinley proclaimed on 21 December 1898, 11 days after the signing of the Treaty of Paris, the occupation of the Islands as 'Benevolent Assimilation'. America took upon itself the task of 'civilizing' and 'educating' the Philippines to make the Filipinos become fit for self-governance.

10 For a discussion of the social impact of classification, see G. C. Bowker and S. L. Star (2006) *Sorting Things Out: classification and its consequences*, MIT Press.

11 This is my translation from the original Filipino.

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