Borderland Memories

In the 1980s, as China transitioned to the post-Mao era, a statesponsored oral history project led to the publication of local, regional, and national histories. They took the form of written and transcribed personal testimonies of events that preceded the turmoil of both the Cultural Revolution and, in many cases, the Communist victory in 1949. Known as *wenshi ziliao*, these publications represent an intense process of historical memory production that has received little scholarly attention. Hitherto unexamined archival materials and oral histories reveal unresolved tensions in post–Cultural Revolution reconciliation and mobilization, informing negotiations between local elites and the state, and between Party and non-Party organizations. Taking the northeast Russia–Manchuria borderlands as a case study, Martin T. Fromm examines the creation of post-Mao identities, political mobilization, and knowledge production in China.

Martin T. Fromm is an assistant professor at Worcester State University. He is the editor of the academic journal *Currents in Teaching and Learning*.

Cambridge Studies in the History of the People's Republic of China

Series Editors

Jeremy Brown, Jacob Eyferth, Daniel Leese, Michael Schoenhals

Cambridge Studies in the History of the People's Republic of China is a major series of ambitious works in the social, political, and cultural history of socialist China. Aided by a wealth of new sources, recent research pays close attention to regional differences, to perspectives from the social and geographical margins, and to the unintended consequences of Communist Party rule. Books in the series contribute to this historical reevaluation by presenting the most stimulating and rigorously researched works in the field to a broad audience. The series invites submissions from a variety of disciplines and approaches, based on written, material, or oral sources. Particularly welcome are those works that bridge the 1949 and 1978 divides, and those that seek to understand China in an international or global context.

Studies of the Weatherhead East Asian Institute, Columbia University

The Studies of the Weatherhead East Asian Institute of Columbia University were inaugurated in 1962 to bring to a wider public the results of significant new research on modern and contemporary East Asia.

A list of titles in this series can be found at the back of the book.

Borderland Memories

Searching for Historical Identity in Post-Mao China

Martin T. Fromm Worcester State University



Cambridge University Press 978-1-108-47592-1 — Borderland Memories Searching for Historical Identity in Post-Mao China Martin T. Fromm Frontmatter <u>More Information</u>



University Printing House, Cambridge CB2 8BS, United Kingdom

One Liberty Plaza, 20th Floor, New York, NY 10006, USA

477 Williamstown Road, Port Melbourne, VIC 3207, Australia

314–321, 3rd Floor, Plot 3, Splendor Forum, Jasola District Centre, New Delhi – 110025, India

79 Anson Road, #06-04/06, Singapore 079906

Cambridge University Press is part of the University of Cambridge.

It furthers the University's mission by disseminating knowledge in the pursuit of education, learning, and research at the highest international levels of excellence.

www.cambridge.org Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9781108475921 DOI: 10.1017/9781108571784

© Martin T. Fromm 2019

This publication is in copyright. Subject to statutory exception and to the provisions of relevant collective licensing agreements, no reproduction of any part may take place without the written permission of Cambridge University Press.

First published 2019

Printed and bound in Great Britain by Clays Ltd, Elcograf S.p.A.

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data Names: Fromm, Martin T., 1974– author. Title: Borderland memories : searching for historical identity in post-Mao China / Martin T. Fromm. Description: Cambridge ; New York, NY : Cambridge University Press, [2019] | Series: Cambridge studies in the history of the People's Republic of China | Includes bibliographical references and index. Identifiers: LCCN 2018056574 | ISBN 9781108475921 (alk. paper) Subjects: LCSH: China – History – 1976–2002 – Historiography. | China – History – 1976–2002 – Sources. | China – History – 1949–1976 – Historiography. | China – History – 1949–1976 – Sources. | Borderlands – China – Historiography. | Borderlands – Soviet Union – Historiography. | Nationalism and historiography – China. | Nationalism and collective memory – China. Classification: LCC DS779.19 .F76 2019 | DDC 951.05/8072–dc23 LC record available at https://lccn.loc.gov/2018056574

ISBN 978-1-108-47592-1 Hardback

Cambridge University Press has no responsibility for the persistence or accuracy of URLs for external or third-party internet websites referred to in this publication and does not guarantee that any content on such websites is, or will remain, accurate or appropriate.

Cambridge University Press 978-1-108-47592-1 — Borderland Memories Searching for Historical Identity in Post-Mao China Martin T. Fromm Frontmatter <u>More Information</u>

This book is dedicated to my lovely wife, Minjin Fromm. I can't wait to see what's on the next page of our blessed life together.

Cambridge University Press 978-1-108-47592-1 — Borderland Memories Searching for Historical Identity in Post-Mao China Martin T. Fromm Frontmatter <u>More Information</u>

Contents

	Acknowledgments	page x
	Introduction	1
1	Reconfiguring Cultural Production in the Post-Mao Transition	20
2	Borderland Ambiguities in Narratives of Modernization and Liberation	ł 45
3	Relocating the Nation outside the Nation: Forging a Borderland-Centered Nationalist Discourse	75
4	The "Historical Science" of Wenshi Ziliao	110
5	Affective Community and Historical Rehabilitation: "Widely Making Friends" to Resecure Political Loyalty	154
6	Mobilizing a "Patriotic United Front"	200
7	Local, Regional, and National Dynamics of Wenshi Ziliao Production	223
	Conclusion	255
	References Index	261 280

Acknowledgments

I am deeply indebted to the mentorship, collaboration, friendship, and generosity of others without whom this book could not have come into fruition. The research for this book began during my years of graduate study at Columbia University, and I owe tremendous gratitude to my primary advisor, Eugenia Lean, who guided and supported me through the many challenging phases of this project with incredible wisdom and patience. With sagely mentorship, transformational discernment, and unwavering commitment, Professor Lean guided and saw me through numerous successive versions of the manuscript. In the process, she has not only played a pivotal role in the development of this book, but has also taught me in a profound way what it means to be a truly dedicated mentor.

Several other individuals also played important mentoring roles during the formative period of research. Adam McKeown, whose pioneering work in global history has helped to reshape the field, taught me to look beyond national boundaries and encouraged me to put borders, borderlands, and frontiers at the center of history. I also benefited from Joseph Tse-Hei Lee's brilliant ability to identify and articulate the core essence hidden in the tangled-up words of earlier drafts and his generous, compassionate commitment to building scholarly community. Dorothy Ko gave me inspiring advice and encouragement about forging ahead with oral history and memory at a pivotal transitional moment in my research. The original impetus for this study came from Madeleine Zelin, whom I burdened with many muddled drafts in the early stages of the project and who was gracious about giving her advisees the freedom to explore topics ranging far from her own.

The research in China that was crucial to the formation of this book relied on the expansive generosity and warm, family-like friendship of Dan Ben-Canaan. He and his wife, Yisha Liang, hosted me on multiple occasions in Harbin, which because of them became a second home for me. Dan Ben-Canaan has devoted the past fifteen years of his life to making Harbin a hospitable place for scholars from around the world, and I am indeed fortunate that he extended that gracious hospitality to

х

Cambridge University Press 978-1-108-47592-1 — Borderland Memories Searching for Historical Identity in Post-Mao China Martin T. Fromm Frontmatter <u>More Information</u>

Acknowledgments

me. In addition to generously hosting me, he and Yisha Liang did everything within their power to make resources accessible to me, to connect me to other scholars and stakeholders in my field, and to introduce me to talented students in his program, including Chen Chen and Ivy Chi, who provided important research assistance.

The archival research for this book would not have been possible without the courageous determination and fiery resolve of my intrepid collaborator Chen Chen. With a fierce commitment, assiduous diligence, and unshakable boldness, she undertook the arduous labor of collecting essential documents from county, city, and provincial-level archives in Heilongjiang. There were times during our trip along China's northeast border when I gave up hope of finding the valuable materials we were pursuing, but it was Chen Chen who refused to give up and through her perseverance found a way to access the sought-after documents and to fulfill our research mission.

Several other individuals deserve special thanks for their encouragement and assistance in accessing resources in China. During my last research trip for the book in the summer of 2015, Youping Wang went to great lengths to make personal connections on my behalf with archive personnel and to arrange interviews with prominent local historians and members of the Heilongjiang branch of the People's Political Consultative Conference. In the course of my interactions and conversations with Mr. Wang, I was moved by his love for and devotion to the people, history, and culture of Heilongjiang Province. I also greatly appreciate the kindness of Xiuming Wu and his colleagues at the Local Historical Materials section of the Heilongjiang Provincial Library, who created a friendly and relaxed research environment for me that summer. During an earlier research trip, Xiaoping Ma at the Liaoning provincial branch of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences generously hosted me and patiently assisted me with all aspects of my living and research conditions, truly going out of her way and experiencing great inconvenience on my behalf. During the long, frigid winter, the warm friendship of Rongquan Yu at the Liaoning Provincial Library made the library feel like a second home and made my initial foray into the library's vast collection of wenshi ziliao a delightful experience.

I have benefited at every turn from the critical insights and feedback of colleagues and friends. During my Mellon Teaching Postdoctoral Fellowship at Wheaton College (MA), John Bézis-Selfa and Gen Liang provided me with wise mentorship. Professor Bézis-Selfa opened me up to more sophisticated conceptual understandings of borderlands and pushed me to pursue this theme more deeply. His commitment to cultivating and enriching all aspects of his junior colleagues' academic

Cambridge University Press 978-1-108-47592-1 — Borderland Memories Searching for Historical Identity in Post-Mao China Martin T. Fromm Frontmatter <u>More Information</u>

xii Acknowledgments

experience, and his devotion to rejuvenating and renewing the social and cultural mission of academia in general and the historian as scholareducator in particular, are an inspiration for me. I benefited immensely from Professor Liang's extraordinary dedication to academic rigor and excellence. His grounding of powerful concepts in examination of human interactions and networks taught me the importance of highlighting the detailed fabric of the human experience and set a high standard of research practices to which I have aspired. Fabio Lanza was exceptionally generous with his time and devoted extraordinary intellectual energy to providing critical insights and detailed feedback that have been transformative in the book's revisions and conceptual reframing. Beyond being personally indebted to him for the guidance that he gave me, I am also humbled by his passionate and courageous commitment to infusing social consciousness, moral integrity, and vibrant community into the scholarly enterprise. In my ongoing years at Worcester State University, I have cherished the rich and supportive collegial environment within and beyond my department. I owe particular gratitude to Tona Hangen, whose tireless dedication to cultivating and celebrating the gifts and talents of her colleagues and her embodiment of the scholar-educator ideals have given me continually renewed encouragement and hope through the tenure-track years of book writing and revisions.

I am appreciative of the community of scholars whose collaborative spirit gave me encouragement at all stages of the research and writing journey. Joseph Tse-Hei Lee, Lida Nedilsky, Siu-Keung Cheung, Lu Zhang, Victor Seow, and Mark Elliott organized stimulating symposia and conference panels. I am also grateful for the helpful feedback that James Flath, Thomas Looser, and HoFung Hung shared with me as discussants at various Association of Asian Studies annual conferences. It was a memorable joy collaborating with June Hee Kwon, Benno Weiner, Sandrine Catris, and Dasa Mortensen in putting together exciting panels.

The institutions and organizations that sponsored these scholarly venues for presenting and sharing my research include the Association of Asian Studies, the University of Virginia Jefferson Scholars Foundation, Hong Kong Shue Yan University, Harvard University, and the University of Antwerp.

Generous funding for this project came in the form of grants and fellowships from a number of institutional sources. These included a China and Inner Asia Council Small Grant Award funded by the Association of Asian Studies and the Chiang Ching-kuo Foundation; a Sasakawa Young Leaders Fellowship sponsored by Columbia University's Weatherhead East Asian Institute; the Whiting

Cambridge University Press 978-1-108-47592-1 — Borderland Memories Searching for Historical Identity in Post-Mao China Martin T. Fromm Frontmatter <u>More Information</u>

Acknowledgments

Foundation's Whiting Dissertation Writing Fellowship; and a Fulbright IIE Fellowship for Dissertation Research with host institution support from the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences.

I am grateful for the anonymous reviewers' painstakingly thorough and constructive comments, and also for the expert and steady editorial hands through which the manuscript passed at every stage of the review and publication process. Eugenia Lean and Kenneth Ross Yelsey were steadfast in their belief in the manuscript and patiently guided the book through successive rounds of review, pushing and encouraging me to make the necessary revisions. The manuscript then advanced into the capable hands of Cambridge University Press Senior Commissioning Editor Lucy Rhymer, who oversaw with diligent care the final stages of the review process. Cambridge University Press Editorial Assistant Lisa Carter, Senior Content Manager Ian McIver, and Integra Project Manager Sunantha Ramamoorthy guided me expertly through each step of post-review production. I also thank Ami Naramor for her highly detailed and thorough attention to copyediting the manuscript.

I want to express my love and affection for my family, including my brother, Christian Fromm, whose courage and truth-seeking spirit I have always admired, and my mother, Sharon Fromm, who always supported my academic pursuits with unconditional love. I am thankful to Bradley Hanna for his kindness, generosity, and delightful conversations. My father-in-law Yong-Cheol Kim's story of overcoming hardship and fearlessly bringing his family to and building an academic career in America is a moving example for me, and my mother-in-law Hyung-Soon Kim's profound wisdom and loving-kindness are a blessing to everyone around her. They both welcomed me into their home and family with generous and open arms from the moment I met them. I write this in loving memory of my father, Hans Fromm, whose dedication to research and scholarship in the medical field was a deep source of inspiration for my own academic endeavors. Finally, I dedicate this book to my lovely wife, Minjin Fromm, whose boundless and tender love and friendship endow with deep meaning and joy every day of our blessed life together.