

Article



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Archipelago of Remembrance: Archiving Island History

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Abstract: Why did a Bengali photojournalist from Dhamrai in erstwhile East Pakistan establish a photography studio in Port Blair? The story of Pramatha Kishore Sanyal's arrival to Andaman is intertwined with independent India's history of refugee rehabilitation. There were many mainland communities that were settled on the islands between 1949 and 1980, including Bengal Partition's refugees. Several government employees were also transferred to aid the task of rehabilitation. Mr. Sanyal's wife, Sabita, was one such person.

The late photographer's collection of black-and-white images from the 1960s-80s depict the indigenous Onge people of Little Andaman Island. With the settlement of mainland communities, the creation of Indian Ocean tribal reserves, and the 2004 tsunami, the habitation zone of Onge has changed. A small number of photographs from miscellaneous sources show the simultaneous process of refugee rehabilitation across the Islands. Upon a chance encounter with these images, I was struck with the impulse to digitally preserve them, hopeful that they will highlight the convergence of peoples and cultures that make island spaces.

The photo-archive is aimed to serve the dual purpose of preservation of memories and building a space for generational transmission of memories to the island's youth.

The article details the process of building this archive, its contents, and its potential to

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align academic research with a community-oriented approach to collection, preservation, and dissemination of islanders' narratives.

Keywords: Andaman Islands; Bay of Bengal; island studies; archiving; memory studies; partition; migration

1. Introduction

In this study, I discuss the making of a photo-archive called *Archipelago of Remembrance* containing images of the Andaman Islands from a period of great churning in the archipelago's history. The collection of digital copies of black-and-white photographs were procured primarily from a photography studio by the name of *Memory Studio* in Port Blair (at the time of encounter in January 2024, later renamed Sri Vijaya Puram in September 2024), the capital city of Andaman and Nicobar Islands. Established in 1962, the studio itself has a fascinating history which I detail later in this study. The photographs date from the 1960s to the 1980s. A range of themes are depicted, from indigenous habitats to the arrival of mainland Indian settlers, to historical and infrastructure landmarks in South Andaman.

To record and present the many histories that have led to the creation of the contemporary Andaman Islands, it is essential to preserve and disseminate these images. The photographs that depict the indigenous Onge people of Little Andaman Island were from an Onge settlement in South Bay. This habitat ceased to exist after the Indian Ocean tsunami of 2004. A smaller number of photographs from miscellaneous sources show the simultaneous process of refugee rehabilitation across the Islands. This internal migration was one of the major reasons behind the gradual circumscription of indigenous habitats and way of life. The images from in and around Port Blair city depict structures that have since disappeared but continue to act as landmarks either through placenames or as memory markers for older residents.

In addition to the photographs, the project is informed by interviews with the studio's current proprietor and the photographer's younger son Abhijit Sanyal, as well as, his elder brother. Oral history interviews provided a critical context for the photographic material, complemented anecdotal information, and helped me better understand the Sanyal family's migration from Kolkata and settlement in Port Blair, a history that is intertwined with the postcolonial nation's history of refugee rehabilitation. The archive serves the dual purpose of preservation of memories and creation of a space for transmission of these memories to the island's youth.

The essay begins with a brief historical context to the settlement of mainland Indians in the Andaman Islands and its resulting impact on the indigenous Onge lifeworld. This leads to the next section which foregrounds the necessity of building this archive in the present time. The following section introduces the reader to *Memory Studio* and the history of the photographs.

This is followed by a discussion on archiving both as a process and an outcome with reference to *Archipelago of Remembrance*. The concluding section takes stock of the archive-in-progress and charts its future trajectory.

2. Refugee Rehabilitation, Island Development and the Indigenous Onge People of Little Andaman

In the aftermath of India's Partition of 1947, Andaman Islands served as a receiving destination for a large bulk of refugee population from the erstwhile state of East Pakistan via West Bengal and the Indian mainland [1,2]. The Japanese occupation of the Islands between 1942 to 1945, led to a serious crisis of the Island's infrastructure and resources, most notably depletion of agriculture and shortage of labour [3,4]. This proved to be the ideal backdrop for using the labour of Bengali refugees to nurse the Island back to operational health.

Schemes were initiated by the Indian state to recruit healthy, fit and young male farmers and their families to establish agricultural settlements in the Islands [4–8]. These hard-working agriculturalists usually belonged to the lower-castes and lower-classes. Being an island, Andaman provided the perfect opportunity to test out newer systems of agriculture that, if successful, could later be implemented on the mainland [9]. Settlements were made in three phases: first in South Andaman between 1949 and 1952; second in Middle and North Andaman between 1953 and 1960; and third in Neil Island, Little Andaman and Betapur (Middle Andaman) between 1965 and 1980. Little Andaman Island was the last to be settled.

With the large-scale transportation of populations from the mainland and their settlement on Little Andaman Island, the sixties and seventies marked a turning point for the islands. The remotest inhabited island in the Andaman group, Little Andaman, is over a hundred kilometres southward of Port Blair. In order to ensure the safety of British ships passing through this geopolitically significant region and firmly demarcate it as a part of British imperial territory, the British maintained a working relationship with the indigenous Onges – a part of the dwindling, semi-nomadic, hunter-gatherer Negrito populations in South and Southeast Asia [10,11]. Because the Onges were the only inhabitants of Little Andaman Island, unlike the other indigenous groups on Great Andaman Island, they did not require designated reserves [10]. Following India's independence, the Anthropological Survey of India planned to establish a special unit in Little Andaman 'to assist the Onges in any way that would be desirable and feasible' [10].¹ This included initiatives to 'civilize' the Onge people by drawing them away from their semi-nomadic lifestyle, while simultaneously continuing colonial practices like inviting groups of Onges to pay visits to the Chief Commissioner in Port Blair in exchange of gifts of tobacco, tea and sugar, which were not part of the Onge diet in the first place [10]. The Onges lived in the Hut Bay area where there was an abundance of freshwater [12]. The coast-dwelling Onge people were able to continue their 'hunting-gathering-fishing way of life' till the mid-sixties, when programmes for 'developing' the island were announced and

mainland populations started being transported to the island [10]. In 1972, the area near Hut Bay had to be 'de-reserved' so that development activities could be undertaken in the region. Incidentally, Hut Bay is the largest town and harbour in Little Andaman, which was designated to be developed as the island's commercial hub.

When settlement began in Little Andaman between 1968 and 1974 [3,13], along with 366 Bengali families several Burmese and Sri Lankan families were also brought in. Later, many Nicobarese families and Moplah families were also shifted from other parts of the Islands to Little Andaman. Venkateswar [10] notes, much of these developmental activities from the mid-sixties to the late-seventies – namely, clearing 30,000 hectares of forest for settler villages; commercial exploitation of forests under the Andaman and Nicobar Forest and Plantation Development Corporation (ANFPDC); extraction of timber by private traders and illegal logging – took place at the expense of the Onge people's way of life. In addition to deforestation for the construction of roads, public offices, private industries, a harbour, a sub-naval base, an agricultural farm, and a helipad, the introduction of red oil palm plantations further pushed the Onge to the northern and southern fringes of the island [10]. The Onge habitation zone was confined to two 'permanent settlements' – Dugong Creek in the north and South Bay at the southern tip – on two ends of the Little Andaman Island [10]. Attempts to direct the Onge away from subsistence practices rooted in the forest and towards other schemes like working in piggery units, vegetable gardens, cow and goat-rearing projects were initiated by the state. After the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami which had a devastating impact on Little Andaman accounting for 85 per cent of all lives lost in the Andaman Islands [12], population of both settlements were merged and only the Dugong Creek settlement exists now [14].

3. Why Archive the Island's History?

Once footloose refugees and migrants, the settlers have shaken off their past identities and firmly established themselves as land-owning, upwardly mobile, island residents. However, this has also led to a gradual erasure of historical events and trajectories that led to the settlement of mainlanders in the Andaman Islands. In oral history interviews with first- and second-generation Bengali settlers, I found there was little to no intergenerational transmission of memories among latter generations of settler children [15,16]. Themes of nostalgic remembrance, particularly of their homeland in East Pakistan, which otherwise dominate the field of refugee memory and identity, are absent in case of the Island's Bengali settlers [17]. According to Sen, the settlers' 'act of remembering' is informed by their location in the Islands, and by emphasizing narratives of 'agency and selfhood [18],' they actively shape a new identity for themselves. The settler's identity-making became possible by 'turning their backs on the Indian mainland' [19]. In other words, the act of forgetting which is deliberately employed by the settlers to enable the establishment of a new 'homeland', is the key to understanding their identity [17]. Forgotten by the mainland-centric partition discourse on account of

being settled at the 'frontier', the settler identity is shaped by the erasure of the memory of multiple displacements and a strong rooting in the islands, distanced from the mainland. These 'social processes of healing and recovery, or of repression and forgetting' [20], which form a large part in the making of settler memory results in erasures in its intergenerational transmission. Moreover, remembering is always simultaneous with forgetting as recollection is an act of reconstruction, and certain events are actively forgotten to make the construction of a new identity possible.

Many second-generation settlers now feel this lack of intergenerational transmission of memories has affected the youth's sense of cultural identity. Faced with intergenerational changes in an ecologically-sensitive island-space undergoing rapid developmental changes and ingress of tourism-as-development, the older settlers believe that preservation of their histories and memories is a vital and urgent task. Further, my prior research [21] highlights the significance of oral history interviews in eliciting not only richer data but often data that is contradictory to evidence available in bureaucratic archives [22–24]. The current project stems from the need for a different archive that includes peoples' voices and histories that are often overlooked by bureaucratic archives. The project set out with the objective of preservation of islanders' memories and creation of a digital space for its generational transmission to the island's youth, with active community participation. Moreover, the project is motivated to align academic research with community-oriented approach to collection, preservation, and dissemination of islanders' narratives. I have tried to achieve this by ensuring transparency and accountability between the researcher and the community members, keeping all stakeholders informed through all stages of archive-building, and returning to the community the output, that is, the archive, which is rarely possible with conventional academic publications.

In course of conducting my doctoral research, I had come across the name 'Memory Studio' on small paper envelopes carrying passport size photos of island residents preserved in the official files of the Secretariat archive in Port Blair. The current project began when I chanced upon *Memory Studio* in Port Blair in January 2024 and had the unbelievable luck of viewing close to hundred black-and-white photographs from the 1960s and 1980s across the islands. Most notable of these were the photographs from the now-lost Onge settlement of South Bay in Little Andaman. In addition to 75 photographs contributed by *Memory Studio*, the project also includes 8 photographs contributed by Mr. Prasenjit Sanyal,² and 10 photographs contributed by Dr. Swapan Biswas.³ Further, oral history interviews were conducted with both proprietor Mr. Abhijit Sanyal and his elder brother Mr. Prasenjit Sanyal to learn about the history of the studio, the photographer Pramatha Kishore Sanyal, and context to specific photographs. The process of conducting oral history interviews also helped corroborate and correct specific information. This is particularly useful in cases like these where memory can be slippery; as, 'memory work' [25] itself is a delicate process as the 'slippery and selective' [23] nature of memory itself can colour the narratives. Abhijit Sanyal's elder

brother remembered the history of the studio and the exhibition organised at the end of the assignment much more clearly and helped provide additional information. While these interviews were elicited with informed consent and the transcriptions were shared with the interviewee before being published, Prasenjit Sanyal chose to redact portions of his interview which he felt were irrelevant to the subject.

The project was incubated as part of Constructing Personal Archives (CPA) 2024, a six-month incubation program to develop archiving projects and pursue archival research, conducted by Curating for Culture in collaboration with Past Perfect Legacy Management Agency (Mumbai, India), Northeast India Audio Visual Archive (Shillong, India), and Citizens Archive of Pakistan (Karachi, Pakistan). Additionally, the cohort was mentored by scholars and practitioners from South Asia as well as other parts of the world. Their mentorship has helped shape the project and facilitated the building of the digital archive *Archipelago of Remembrance*, as well as its showcase in multiple locations in India. *Archipelago of Remembrance* had its first community showcase on 8 April 2025, in Wandoor, South Andaman, at ANET (Andaman Nicobar Environment Team) in collaboration with Dakshin Foundation, Bengaluru. Between 11-13 April 2025, *Archipelago of Remembrance* exhibited a limited number of images in a collective showcase for CPA 2024 held in Bangalore International Centre, Bengaluru.

4. About Memory Studio

Along with Bengal Partition refugees (1947), many government employees were also resettled to assist with rehabilitation during the period 1949-1980. Mrs. Sabita Sanyal arrived to the islands as a government employee with her husband Pramatha Kishore Sanyal as the dependent family member in the year 1961. A graduate of Ashutosh College in Calcutta, Sabita Sanyal was working as a stenographer in the Ministry of Rehabilitation when she was offered a choice of service transfer to either Delhi or Port Blair. Sabita Sanyal had a relative in Andaman – an uncle who owned a coconut and areca nut plantation in North Bay – and this became a deciding factor in her choosing Port Blair over Delhi for the transfer. She had to be given a substantial increment to entice her into this so-called ‘remote’ posting. Her husband Pramatha Kishore Sanyal was trained in photography and cinematography from the iconic Bourne & Shepherd studio in Calcutta. Incidentally, established in 1863, Bourne and Shepherd is considered to be the world’s oldest photography studio, which closed down in 2016 after a devastating fire [26]. He worked as an assistant cameraman with directors like Asit Sen in the Bengali film industry, and was a licensed cameraman under the West Bengal government. After arriving to the islands, Sanyal had to find work for himself. He decided to open a photography studio in Port Blair.

Now, setting up a photography studio in an island cut-off from the mainland by approximately 1300 kilometres was a challenging task. He rented a shop space on the ground floor of ‘Ratanam Niwas’, owned by the

family of K.R. Ganesh, the first nominated Member of Parliament from the Andaman and Nicobar Islands (in 1967). Studio equipment had to be shipped from the mainland, which took months to arrive. When he could not manage to find a photographic enlarger, he had to create a homemade device with whatever was at hand. According to his son Abhijit Sanyal, 'He had the condenser and lens but he did not have the box, so he used a Parag powder milk tin instead to create a makeshift enlarger.'⁴ His ingenuity was not limited to photography alone; in fact, he even tried his hand at carpentry during the making of the studio. Finally, *Memory Studio* was established by Pramatha Kishore Sanyal in 1962.

The then Chief Commissioner, who according to Abhijit Sanyal had an interest in anthropology, approached Pramatha Kishore Sanyal with a proposition to photograph the indigenous Onge, Shompen and Great Andamanese people in their habitats. Before leaving on this several months-long tour, Sanyal had to provide a written declaration to the island administration stating his individual interest and assuming individual risk in undertaking this task, relieving the administration of any obligation in case of any risk to his person. During this tour, which Abhijit Sanyal recalls to have lasted for over two months, his father spent several weeks in at least three locations: Onge settlements in South Bay, Little Andaman; Shompen settlements in Great Nicobar; and Great Andamanese settlements in Strait Islands. He spent weeks living with each indigenous community, eating the food they ate and accompanying them in the work they did. From the photographs shown to me by Abhijit Sanyal, his father spent a considerable time with the Onges of Little Andaman. The collection shows several photographs of wild pigs being roasted on an open fire, along with bountiful catches of sea fish and pandanus fruit. Of all the presents Sanyal carried with him in order to 'befriend' the indigenous people, tobacco seems to be the most favoured, making appearances in multiple photographs being consumed in a variety of ways including being smoked in a homemade 'pipe' fashioned out of crab legs. In addition to showcasing the unfamiliar practices of the archipelago's indigenous people, these images invite us to contemplate the ethical implications of photographing and projecting them as civilizations' others, which was one of my primary concerns while selecting images for the showcase. The idea was not to expose them all over again to the same outsider/mainlander gaze, especially since it wasn't possible to contact the existing Onge people to seek their opinions and permission on the subject.

Previous sections have foregrounded the Onges changing habitats and practices due to increased state intervention and settlement of mainlanders on indigenous land. There was a simultaneous interest in confining the indigenous people in reserved zones and gaining greater knowledge of their practices and way of life, as evidenced by Sanyal's expedition upon being requested by the Chief Commissioner. Pramatha Kishore Sanyal's photographs remain as a melancholic remnant of the now non-existent Onge settlement of South Bay, and it is absolutely essential to preserve these photographs as evidence of their lost way of life and changing face of the

Island. The photographs capture this crucial moment of transition and without these visual reminders these histories would be lost to latter generations.

5. Archiving as Process and Outcome

At the start of the archive-building process with CPA in September 2024, I planned on using oral history interviews from my doctoral research on the Andaman Islands along with a small collection of photographs I had accumulated in course of conducting fieldwork in the islands over the past 6 years. My conversation with Abhijit Sanyal earlier in the year made me hopeful of incorporating other images from his collection. To that effect, I wrote to him communicating the tentative plan of archive-building and the significance of these photographs to such an endeavour. I began this collaboration by clarifying that all copyrights will rest with the studio and its proprietor, and I will only be using digital copies of the images prepared by Abhijit Sanyal for the project. For a brief period, I contemplated the possibility of remote-capturing the images, that is, photographing the images in-situ to create digital copies, which would ensure higher quality and uniformity of proportions without damaging the fragile original material, but due to lack of funds and availability of scanned copies I decided against creating fresh digital copies.

Once I received these digital copies from Abhijit Sanyal, my vision for the archive began shifting towards the shape it eventually took. The first shift was that I decided against using the existing oral history interviews, which were conducted for a related but different purpose and began thinking of collecting fresh interviews with young islanders to gauge their engagement with and interest in these photographs from the past. The other significant step in the process of archiving was meticulously cataloguing the photographs, which took longer than I had imagined. The fields to be included in the catalogue formed a core theme of several discussions with CPA mentors in this period. One of the significant learnings during this time was regarding developments in the discipline of Archival Studies, particularly Critical Archival Studies, that equipped me to understand the mechanism, biases and ethics of archive-building that lay at the stage of cataloguing. This was especially pertinent to my project due to the sensitive nature of the photographs of the Onge people.

A simultaneous development that began at this stage was the evolving role of oral history interviews in the project. I decided on interviewing the photographer's elder son and Abhijit Sanyal's elder brother, Mr. Prasenjit Sanyal, who resides in the mainland in Kolkata, before exposing the images to other islanders. This oral history interview, as I have mentioned earlier in the essay, helped clarify some events that came up in Abhijit Sanyal's interview, as well as, provide further context to the photographs. For instance, the photo titled 'Black and White' showed Pramatha Kishore Sanyal's elder son as a child standing next to a Jarawa child of the same age; one child dressed in shirt, shorts, sweater and shoes, and the other wearing only a cloth

around the waist. According to Abhijit Sanyal, the photograph was taken at Junglighat, a place that got its name due to the 'jungli' (wild) Jarawas being brought there to the depot for health inspection. Prasenjit Sanyal,⁵ however, remembered the image's correct context. He recalled that the photo was not clicked in Junglighat at all. He located the place to be one lodge called Ajanta Mess which used to be working men's accommodation. A group of Onges who were brought by the administration for their medical treatment was putting up in the lodge. When his father got news of this, he rushed with his elder son to the lodge. The photo according to him was the star of the exhibition, and in fact, was the first in the sequence of exhibits at the photo exhibition that took place years later.

Another significant development that took place was the evolution of what was initially conceived as a public archive into a private archive with partial access. As the CPA geared up for showcases of the cohort's archives, the question of what to showcase, to whom, and how became central to the structure of the archive itself. The plan was for each archive to be showcased first at the site where the source material and/or community was based and thereafter to hold a collective showcase in Bengaluru, India. Therefore, I planned the first showcase of *Archipelago of Remembrance* in Port Blair. It was to be held in conjunction with the Annual Open Day event of Andaman and Nicobar Environment Team (ANET) managed by Bengaluru-based organisation Dakshin Foundation.

For the task of the showcase in Wandoor, South Andaman, which was projected to attract a large number of local settler population, I used photographs from the *Memory Studio* collection that portrayed South Andaman landmarks like Marina Park, Aberdeen War Memorial, Aberdeen jetty and Chatham dockyard, among others. Keeping the audience and available resources in mind, I used printed and mounted copies of the digital images for the showcase. Alongside these photographs, I included photographs of the arrival of Bengali settlers on LCTs in Neil Island and photographs depicting infrastructure – like shelter, deforested lands, a temporary jetty – put in place to receive them. Finally, I included photographs from Little Andaman Island depicting a traditional Onge hut – an architectural element now no longer in use – along with photographs of pig-hunting and spear-fishing to highlight the elements of Onge culture which were once highly valued and have now fallen out of practice. I chose to include an image of an Onge couple, seated on the beach displaying the various items presented to them by the photographer as gifts, like a handheld mirror and a cup, to foreground the mediated nature of these photographs. The last leg of the showcase included a portraits of island residents taken by the photographer, including an old Bengali woman, an indigenous leader, a Nicobarese queen, and two local theatre performers, to leave the viewers with the sense that a range of inhabitants formed part of the multicultural islandscape at this chronological juncture.

The island showcase allowed the community to be involved in the viewing of a resource that was culled out of that very context. Mr. Abhijit

Sanyal and his family showed up, and I introduced them to the organisation's key members who promised to help them with the preservation of the original photographs. This helps ensure the involvement of local organisations in the task and the possibility of this work having an afterlife independent of the researcher. The showcase was attended by a large number of island residents ranging from bureaucrats, social activists, school children, parents, interested citizens, and local settlers. The showcase was an interactive experience that generated new information regarding the photographs. In one instance, viewers helped identify the specific location from which the panoramic image of Port Blair city was taken by the bend of the road and stone steps leading to an elevated viewing point that remains unaltered to this day. The other highlight of the exhibition was the image of a colonial-era aqueduct that I used as a tool to drive home the significance of archiving in preservation of history. Constructed in the late-nineteenth century, the aqueduct was responsible for channelling fresh drinking water to residents and passing ships at the nearby jetty. The structure was severely damaged by the earthquake of 1941 and the Indian Ocean tsunami of 2004 dealt the final blow to the already teetering structure. Current island residents know the locality by the placename 'Panighat', meaning watering point, which refers to the original aqueduct structure, but all they have seen of the structure are submerged red brick and lime mortar remnants jutting out next to the jetty during low tides. The showcase offered them a glimpse of the mighty structure standing tall in all its glory. These interactions during the showcase piqued the islanders' interest in the island's history. Yet, in spite of wider accessibility of the visual medium over textual material, one key moment of learning and introspection came in the form of two older men – local shopkeepers – who took a deep interest in the photographs but could not offer any written feedback as they were unable to write. I took away from this particular interaction the need for deeper and sustained engagement on my part as the researcher-archivist-curator to be more inclusive of and sensitive to the needs of a range of audiences and incorporate it within the structure of the showcase.

The collective showcase in Bengaluru included only a few of the photographs, primarily those depicting the process of deforestation to promote agriculture in the islands, as well as, the use of transported elephants to aid the task of logging. Given the public nature of the showcase, it was a deliberate choice to include only the photograph of an Onge couple holding the gifts given by the photographer, which for the purpose of the showcase was partially veiled behind a translucent sheet of paper with the prompt: 'are you ready to enter the archive?' In posing this question, the idea was to make the viewer aware of the fact that archives are never neutral. And to provide the viewer with a moment of introspection on the sensitive nature of objects on display and the ethics of viewing them. At present, the creation of a digital prototype of the archive is also underway.

6. Conclusion

The essay has detailed the evolving vision and scope of *Archipelago of Remembrance*, the process of archive-building, and the community-oriented showcase of the archive in the Islands. While the studio and few island-based individuals continue to safeguard such lesser-known and fast disappearing histories in the form of these invaluable photographs, both these histories and the material are in dire need of preservation. The archive is a step in the process of preserving and sharing these submerged histories. A major challenge that I have encountered in the process of building this archive is the absence of firsthand accounts of Onge individuals, due to the existing policies that rightly restrict access them. In the absence of their narratives, this and any archive will remain a partial one.

In creating this archive, the intention is to present the multiple historical trajectories and circulation of populations that has led to the production of the contemporary Andaman Islands. The archive is committed to prioritizing indigenous and settler voices in their own representation. Delving deeper into the context of each photograph aided by oral history interviews compensated in a small way for the absence of firsthand accounts of the Onge people and the original narrator, that is, the photographer. Further, corroborating multiple oral history accounts helped rectify errors that occur as a result of slippages of memory. Finally, a project of this nature serves as a potent reminder of existing linkages between our present and the past – such as the case of the aqueduct – and holds the potential to initiate intergenerational dialogues within the community.

Thus far the project has been entirely self-funded, however, I am hopeful of growing this project further with the support of Indian government's schemes championing micro-archives and preservation of localised histories. I am hopeful that the archive will grow with islanders' contributions in the form of personal narratives, photographs, and documentation of the Island's tangible and intangible heritage, in the future.

Notes

1. Italian anthropologist Lidio Cipriani was the first to conduct anthropological research on the Onges, and was appointed as director of the sub-regional office of the Anthropological Survey of India (ASI) at Port Blair.
2. These photographs are part of the same collection by photographer Pramatha Kishore Sanyal, but are currently in his elder son's custody in Kolkata.
3. Most of these images were taken for administrative documentation depicting a range of activities undertaken by the rehabilitation, forest, agriculture, and public works departments in the newly established island settlements. The contributed scanned copies are from Neil Island (Shaheed Dweep) that show refugee-turned-settler families debarking LCT (light cargo transport) ships near a temporary wooden jetty. The series also contained a few images of freshly erected barrack-like structures to house

these incoming families, as well as, images of deforested plots of land where these families were to be eventually settled.

4. Interview with Abhijit Sanyal, younger son of photographer Pramatha Kishore Sanyal and current proprietor of Memory Studio, Aberdeen Bazar, Port Blair, January 2024.

5. Interview with Prasenjit Sen, elder son of Pramatha Kishore Sanyal, Kolkata, December 2024.

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