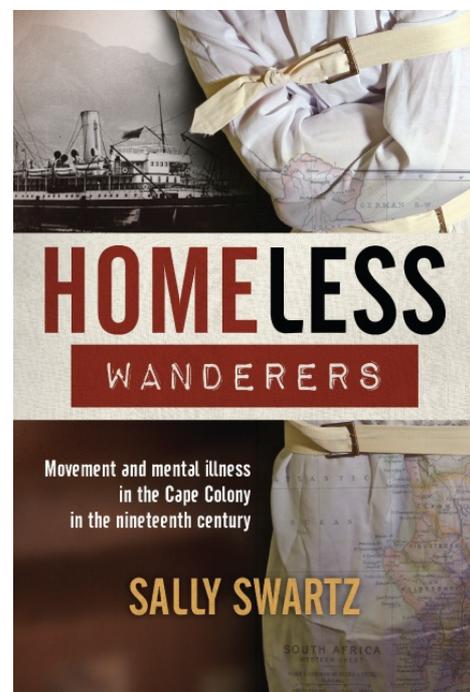


Homeless Wanderers

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About this Publication:

Lunatic asylums in the colonies in the nineteenth century mirrored those of 'home', in Britain. But in a European settler context, the administration and policies of the asylums, and the treatment of their patients, took on many different nuances.

There was a complex interface between lunacy legislation, colonial government, families and communities, and the ways in which these elements affected individuals' experiences of treatment before and after committal to a lunatic asylum. This book breaks new ground in tracing the route of people thought to be 'of unsound mind' from their homes and families to eventual committal to a lunatic asylum in the Cape Colony in the late nineteenth century.

A major theme which links each chapter is the movement of the insane in search of care: in and out of jails, asylums and families; in and out of the colony by land or sea; and their journeys by ship, cart, train or horse.

The management of the insane in the Cape Colony, and the legal and medical institutions with primary responsibility for delivering humane care to this intensely vulnerable group, give a unique perspective on the workings of colonialism itself.

Contents Include:

Chapter 1 - Watching the beetle: motion, emotion and the insane - brief review of the major trends in the histories of colonial asylums, and the master narratives that have shaped the emerging discourses.

Chapter 2 - Insane disposals: patterns of care in British colonial asylums - the broad context of provision for the insane in British colonies in the second half of the nineteenth century. It describes a pattern of consistent neglect and hand-to-mouth arrangements, except in settler colonies with large white populations, such as Australia and Canada.

Chapter 3 - Unsafe custody: In transit to the asylum - Committal to an asylum required the person identified as being of unsound mind to be seen by two doctors, one a district surgeon. The medical certificates were then put before a resident magistrate, and the process of securing a place in an asylum began. But in largely rural areas, with long

in need of institutional care, contacting authorities, battling with doubt and grief about their decision, and making arrangements for removal to an asylum.

Chapter 5 - All at sea: The insane and the colony's borders - The Cape authorities were concerned to do everything possible not to become liable for the care of insane immigrants, who were unlikely to be able to earn a living, and legislation was put in place to identify and repatriate insane travellers.

Chapter 6 - Other migrations: The case of insane Jews in the colonial diaspora - A detailed case study of Jewish insane immigrants, members of a community in transition from one world to another and under considerable stress; the insider-outsider position; their place between middle-class white settlers and the indigenous black population.

Chapter 7 - Home and Away: Insanity and settler colonialism

Conclusion, looking at the idea of 'home' as a place to which to send the insane in the British colonies.

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Of Interest and Benefit to:

Medical historians; historians of British colonialism, the history of the family and Jewish history; psychiatrists and psychologists.