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PHOTOGRAPHY, MEMORY, AND REFUGEE IDENTITY

The Voyage of the SS *Walnut*, 1948

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Preface

> To plot only "places of birth" and degrees of nativeness is to blind oneself to the multiplicity of attachments that people form to places through living in, remembering, and imagining them.
>
> – Liisa Malkki, "*National Geographic:* The Rooting of Peoples and the Territorialization of National Identity among Scholars and Refugees"

In December 2008, thirty-three of the SS *Walnut*'s surviving passengers gathered to celebrate the sixtieth anniversary of their crossing. In 1948, this old British minesweeper, which was originally designed to sleep eighteen men, carried over three hundred Estonian refugees across the Atlantic from Sweden to Canada. They had undertaken this dangerous twenty-eight-day voyage to escape Soviet reprisal. At the reunion, traditional Estonian fare was served buffet style, and the festivities included stories, memories, songs, and poetry, all revolving around the survivors' shared experience. I was asked to be the main speaker for this event because I had spent the past four years conducting archival research and personal interviews with surviving passengers about their migration to Sweden, voyage on the *Walnut,* and time spent in detention at Pier 21 in Halifax. The organizers had been unable to convince the now-senior survivors to speak publicly at the reunion. All were between the ages of sixty-three and ninety-one, and they felt they were getting too old. Excuses ranged from "my voice is too weak" to "my arthritis is bothering me, and I cannot stand for too long." They were more comfortable letting me tell their story and explain the findings of my research. Everyone was curious about what this anthropologist, who was also the daughter of one of the passengers, would have to say about their journey.

My presentation revolved around the historical contextualization of their journey and several themes that had become evident during our conversations. These themes focused on the relational aspects of photography and interviewees' memories. I also decided to show and discuss the photographs on display at the

Pier 21 Museum in Halifax, Nova Scotia. I knew several attendees had not had the opportunity to view this official representation of their experiences, even though the permanent exhibit and accompanying educational programs have been in existence since 1999. A PowerPoint presentation accompanied my speech, and a lengthy DVD showing the still photographs I had compiled and video clips of various events that the passengers had been part of over the years played throughout the meal. The DVD presentation was set to music, enlarged to approximately six by six feet (two by two metres) in size, and projected onto one wall. Off to the side, hundreds of photographs arranged on display boards, in albums, and copied as individual prints covered two large tables. These collections had been supplied by several of the surviving passengers specifically for this event, and we had looked at many of these images together during our one-on-one interviews. Overall, the prevalence of photographs at this reunion was striking. Photographic images in a variety of formats enlivened the dining area, and it was clear that there was a renewed interest in historical images of the voyage, which were made accessible through contemporary technologies.

In all, there were approximately sixty guests, thirty of whom had been passengers. After spending about a half hour mingling, all of the original passengers were asked to pose together in the stairwell for a group photo, as there was no room in the dining hall. It took about twenty minutes to stage this photo, to get everyone posed and positioned, and many of the passengers joked about feeling like they were back on the *Walnut* – all crammed together (Figure 1). Coincidentally, the resulting image is similar to a group photo taken at Pier 21 in 1949, which is part of the video currently on display at the museum (Figure 26). Another photograph was taken of the oldest and the youngest surviving passengers at this reunion (Figure 2). This photo purposely mimics an image published in the *Halifax Mail* in 1948, which depicted the oldest passenger, eighty-year-old Anna Marie Kodilanen, holding two-year-old Jutta Klemmer on her lap prior to disembarking the ship. The original photograph is framed and posed in portraiture style; it is a close-up head shot of both passengers smiling and looking directly at the camera. The key role photography played at this reunion was to link past images and memories with the present reuniting of old friends. The photos created in 2008 are similar in content to most of the images in the original collection of over two hundred photos that were taken by several passengers throughout their journey to Canada in 1948; the majority express a sense of camaraderie through depictions of small groups of passengers standing together talking or posing with friends and family (Figure 3). (A few

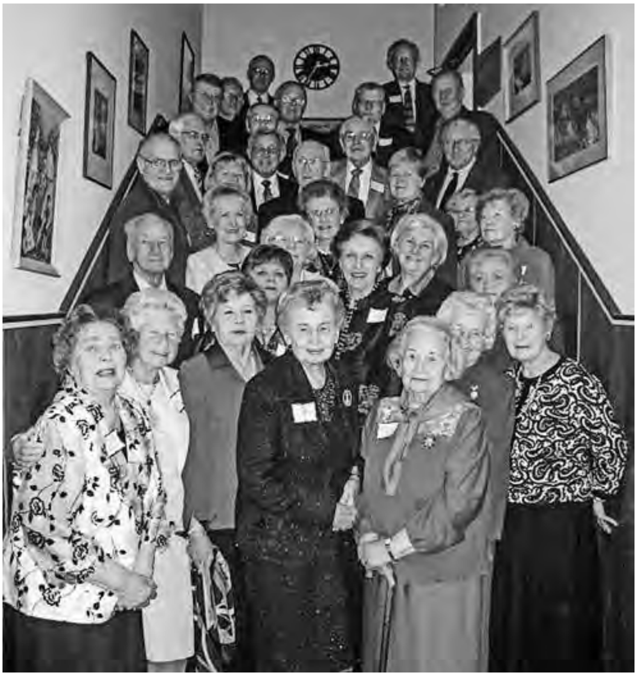
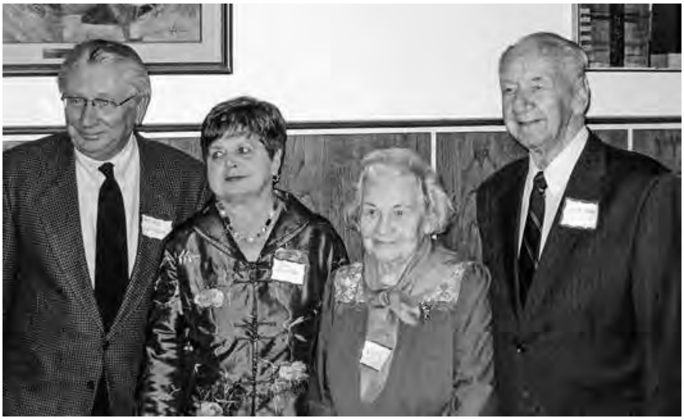


Figure 1 The *Walnut*'s passengers' sixtieth reunion, 6 December 2008. *Photograph by Tiiu Roiser-Chorowiec, courtesy of Tiiu Roiser-Chorowiec, private collection*

Figure 2 The youngest and the oldest existing *Walnut* passengers at the 2008 reunion, 6 December 2008. *Photograph by Lilly Kastelic, courtesy of Lilly Kastelic, private collection*



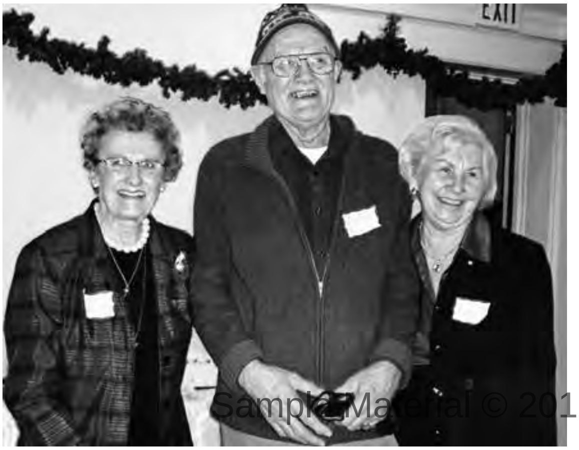


Figure 3 Laughing together at the sixtieth reunion, 6 December 2008. *Photograph by Linda Hogarth, courtesy of Linda Hogarth, private collection*

days after the reunion, I received collections of photographs taken by several of the surviving passengers or their family members via email, and almost all of them showed small groups of friends or family posed together. They were all either smiling or eating in the photos.) The numerous digital photos taken in 2008 create a visual epilogue of sorts.

Photography has played a remarkable role in the passengers' personal memories as well as social memories constituted through the Pier 21 Museum. Many of the passengers I interviewed had small collections, sometimes only two to three photos that they kept in albums, drawers, or boxes. They brought these out occasionally during private moments of reflection on this experience. At the Pier 21 Museum, many of the same photos aided in teaching visitors, including large numbers of grade school children, about Canadian citizenship and national unity.

These widely differing uses speak to photography's history as a popular tool and inspiration in the creation and representation of multiple cultural meanings and interpretations and to the "ethnographicness" of photographs, which, as Elizabeth Edwards (2001, 14) states, "lies in the absorption and consumption of images within specific discourses, rather than in the intention of the images at their inscription." The continual use of and re-engagement with photographs of this voyage adds to their significance as objects of ethnographic interest.

If a fieldwork "site" can be defined as a *place* from where multiple, distinctive, and exceptional views of cultural landscapes can emerge and be identified, as suggested by Appadurai (1990, 7), and if, as Metcalfe (2001, 166) states, "sites" as relevant entities have always been metaphorical in nature, then I suggest that it is possible to allocate the function of "site" to a collection of photographs, if their usage reoccurs over time and if there are continual re-engagements with them. The *Walnut* Collection furthers this idea through its representation of various geographic locations and its use in various public or official and more private, personal venues in conjunction with memory. These images were revisited over time in order to experience, re-experience, recall, and perform refugee identity. The *Walnut* Collection allows for the representation of individual experience and the reimagination of various collective identities through a publicly performed past that continually reinvents ideas about refugees. For me, for surviving *Walnut* passengers and their families, for visitors to the Pier 21 Museum, and for grade school students in Canada, these photographs provide an open field or toolbox in which the creation of ideas about refugees arriving in Canada can propagate. Understanding their "ethnographicness" – which privileges use, and subsequently meaning, over content, subject matter, and aesthetics – significantly adds to discursive meanings, including memories and stories that are elicited in conjunction with their viewing. In this example, transferences that take place between memory and photography are enhanced through the materiality of photography, which in turn allows for the perpetuation of socially imposed meanings as well as the creation of new, personalized ideas about space, identity, and time.

My research took me on a journey into the homes of the *Walnut*'s passengers, into Estonia House in Toronto and its archives, into Library and Archives Canada in Ottawa, into the archives at Tartu College in Toronto, through a search of international newspaper articles, to the Pier 21 Museum in Halifax, to Sweden, to Estonia, and to the sixtieth *Walnut* reunion in December 2008. It involved documenting the journey that the *Walnut* Collection, over two hundred photographs, had taken over a sixty-year period as much as it involved documenting the passengers' memories and various aspects of identity, which were brought to light in conjunction with these photographs. During an initial set of interviews in which I experienced the memories surrounding these reproductions of old black-and-white photos, a dominant narrative about loss, trauma, and victimization as well as a complex interweave of counter-narratives emerged. In a second set of interviews, the same photographs in a different context, in the form of a short video shown at the Pier 21 Museum, inspired a different set of feelings, memories, and notions about the identities of these individuals who were once refugees. As I explored the social biographies of these photos, I came to understand the power that photographs can have as tools for articulating identity. They can inspire recollections for those who have experienced forced migration, reproduce stereotypes that support state ideologies, and be used as a tool for understanding how these opposing types of representation are intermeshed. Throughout this process, it became apparent that the ambiguousness of photography is linked to the contradictory nature of memory, that the poignancy of photography lay in its ability to transcend ideas about a divide between personal-private and public-official memories. As well, photographs become veils that hide memories as well as spaces where forgotten memories are brought to mind, shared, felt, and re-experienced. The tensions that exist between memory, with its intertwined public and private components, and photography enhanced my understanding of the inner journey that the *Walnut*'s passengers have undertaken over the past sixty years in terms of their identity as cultural and social beings. This book explores the "ethnographicness" of the *Walnut* Collection and how photography is linked to memory in the creation of a space where refugee identity is negotiated. It examines various ways that responses, meanings, feelings, and thoughts are triggered by photographs. In general terms, this book is about understanding how photographs and memory operate in conjunction with the in-between spaces that are created in relation to being inside and outside of various aspects of identity over time and across geographical spaces.

Acknowledgments

This book is a testimony to my love of photographs and stems from countless hours poring over family albums with my grandmother. It also reflects the support and caring of many others who have influenced my life and my academic endeavours. Writing can be a lonely and isolating experience, and it is often not achievable without personal, practical, and financial support. My sincere gratitude goes to my father; my daughter, Dylan; my brother, Steve; my sister-in-law Sil; and my uncle and aunt, Lennart and Linda Mannik, for their assistance. I would also like to thank all my friends (including my canine and feline companions) for their love, support, and patience over the last few years.

Researching this project was a rich and enjoyable experience. I owe an immense debt of gratitude to all of the *Walnut*'s surviving passengers who met with me and often welcomed me into their homes. This project would not exist except for your gracious gift of time, stories, memories, and photographs. Every person who was interviewed provided interesting, engaging, and heartfelt insights into their experiences as newcomers to Canada in 1948. I would particularly like to thank the photographers whose creative work makes up the collection at the centre of this book: Max Kalm, Manivald Sein, Enno Lauri, and Joann Saarniit. Their foresight in documenting this voyage visually remains invaluable.

Many other scholars helped in the inception of this project and the writing of this book, from its first draft to the final manuscript. I would like to thank David A. Murray for long meetings and enjoyable lunches. His input was perceptive, helpful, and inspiring. I would also like to thank Teresa Holmes for many impromptu meetings and helpful editing advice and Colin Coates for his supportive phone calls, wealth of insight, and attention to historical details that added depth and substance to this project. I would like to thank Melissa Pitts sincerely for her sensitive criticism, persistence, and editing expertise in helping me through to the final stages of this process. And finally, thank you to the two anonymous reviewers who took the time to offer valuable insights and constructive criticism.

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PHOTOGRAPHY, MEMORY, AND REFUGEE IDENTITY

Introduction

> A Refugee is a man who votes with his feet.
>
> – Lenin[1]

> In their silence photographs invite us to provide a story.
>
> – Peter Geller, *Northern Exposures: Photographing and Filming the Canadian North*

In 1948, the HMS *Walnut* was purchased by a small group of Estonians who were living in Sweden after fleeing their homeland. It was originally an armed trawler, one of the "Tree Class" trawlers built by the British navy in small fishing-boat shipyards. These vessels were used to protect major ports; in anti-submarine warfare and as minesweepers, they swept ports for drifting and submerged mines. They could be manned by local fishermen and then converted back into fishing boats in peacetime. The HMS *Walnut* was built by Smith's Dock Company in South Bank-on-Tees and launched in 1939. All "Tree Class" trawlers were 550 tons and 164 feet (50 metres) long, designed to accommodate thirty-five crew members with a top speed of 11.5 knots (Preston 1989, 78). This slow speed was the reason many of these vessels were sunk in battle and also explains why it took the *Walnut* twenty-eight days to cross the Atlantic in 1948. However, the organizers of this voyage knew it was a highly seaworthy vessel, able to withstand all types of weather and mechanically similar to ships that the crew, who had been experienced deep-sea fishermen in Estonia, were familiar with.

In 1940, the Soviet army occupied Estonia. By June 1941, over twelve thousand Estonians were sent to concentration camps in Siberia. In July 1941, Estonia was overtaken by German occupation, initiating a new wave of persecution. As well, all Jewish people and Estonian gypsies were annihilated. In 1944, the Soviets occupied Estonia once more. Approximately seventy thousand people fled, and a new wave of mass arrests and executions began. It is estimated that during this period Estonia lost over one-third of its original population (approximately one million Estonian citizens).[2] Thousands escaped to Sweden, Finland, and Germany. Sweden positioned itself as neutral territory after the war; however, in 1945, under extreme pressure, 2,700 soldiers, including 175 Estonians, were extradited to the Soviet Union (Aun 1985, 22-24). Even though the Swedish government continued to announce that it would not bend to Stalin's defiant push for repatriation, fears abounded among all Baltic refugees.[3] Between 1947 and 1950, approximately fifty ships, nicknamed the "Little Viking boats," left Sweden. These vessels, which ranged in size from small, 30-foot (9-metre) sailing sloops to 164-foot (50-metre) trawlers, were mostly filled with Estonians.[4] Eleven landed in Canada; the largest of these was the *Walnut*.

Forty shareholders, incorporated under the title Compania Maritima *Walnut* S.A., pooled their resources to outfit this old British minesweeper so that it would be capable of carrying over three hundred passengers in search of a new home in Canada across the Atlantic. For some months, the *Walnut* stayed docked in the Göteborg harbour while it was refitted and plans were made for its departure. By late October, it was ready to set sail. A total of 352 people left Sweden on 17 November 1948 to brave this crossing. Most of the *Walnut*'s passengers were Estonian refugees (305), and the rest were originally from Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Austria, and Finland. There were 70 children and 123 women.[5] The youngest was ten months old and the oldest passenger was eighty-two. They were all without passports and knew that they faced illegal entry into Canada.

The decision to board the *Walnut* meant giving up all recently acquired domestic comforts and leaving friendships, jobs, and sometimes even family members behind. Each passenger was allowed to take only one small suitcase.

As stated earlier, this trawler was originally designed to sleep only thirty-five crewmembers, so small wooden boxes, or "cubbyholes," were built. Most of the passengers were not aware that these "cubbyholes"[6] would be their sole accommodation until they actually boarded the ship. They measured two feet (sixty-one centimetres) wide, two feet high, and six feet (1.8 metres) long and were stacked in three tiers. The passengers could not sit up in them and had to crawl in feet first. These cramped areas were where they spent most of their time. All other accommodations were primitive as well. There were two makeshift toilets and a mock dining room (a simple tent-like enclosure on the deck) for 347 people. Despite the allowance for only sparse belongings, several of the *Walnut*'s passengers did bring cameras with them and took photographs throughout the voyage.

By all accounts, their journey was difficult. The ship was extremely overcrowded and, from what I was told, crossing the North Sea and then the Atlantic Ocean during the winter months was a mistake. Throughout their twenty-eight-day passage, they experienced four severe winter storms. This little minesweeper had a difficult time making headway through immensely high waves. Those trapped inside experienced bodily sensations akin to a roller-coaster ride that went on for hours, sometimes days. Following a terrific storm in the North Sea, the original co-pilot, a German captain, got off at Sligo, Ireland, because he was sure the *Walnut* would not make it across the Atlantic. Midway to Canada, the radio and navigational equipment broke down, and the crew had no way of signalling for help. Although most remained stoic, the atmosphere was saturated with angst. Several of the surviving passengers told me that they had spent their time praying in between bouts of seasickness that lasted for days at a time.

The SS *Walnut*'s voyage was part of a larger influx of displaced persons coming to Canada after the Second World War. Between 1946 and 1949, almost 100,000 people were allowed in. The end of the war left millions displaced, and many of them, including most Estonians, had no desire to return to their now occupied homelands. By 1948, several nations, including Canada, were in the process of altering immigration policies to accommodate the "right types" of refugees. Estonian refugees living in Sweden and Germany began sending letters to the Canadian government asking for refuge in 1946. Final decisions concerning who should be allowed in were compounded by the beginnings of Cold War hysteria. In particular, Sweden was in a precarious position due to its proximity to Russia and did not want to "allow open Canadian processing of these Estonians as 'displaced persons'" (Whitaker and Marcuse 1994, 18-19). Nevertheless, correspondence between the two governments in reference to the SS *Walnut*'s arrival, in 1948, did demonstrate a willingness on both sides to allow secret processing for certain individuals.

Conversely, propaganda surrounding their arrival was notable. Reports in the Swedish newspaper *Ny Dag* (described as a Communist publication) were circulated between Canadian government officials as proof that there were many irregularities about the mysterious and illegal nature of this voyage. Internal conversations concerning the *Walnut*'s passengers positioned them as a dangerous lot because of their tenacity and unpredictability, presumably evidenced through the mass arrival of small boats in Sweden in 1944. Several immigration officials also expressed fears that the acceptance of this large group would precipitate innumerable future voyages. Two days prior to the *Walnut*'s actual arrival, the *Halifax Mail* fashioned a headline warning the public: "347 Refugees, Fleeing Reds, Believed on Way to Halifax" (11 December 1948). Four other passengers besides the co-pilot had disembarked at Sligo.

On 13 December, the *Walnut* landed in Canada flying the Honduran flag. After initially mooring in Sydney, Nova Scotia, it was allowed to dock in Halifax, where the passengers disembarked at Pier 21. There was a flurry of medical tests and interviews before all 347 were confined in two detention facilities, under twenty-four-hour watch. They were kept under lock and key for a month. During the third week, only one guard was hired to stand outside the front door (two had been watching over them up until that point). Observation reports during that time period depicted "the detainees" as tidy and active. By January 1949, local newspapers were portraying these Estonians as a "wonderful lot of people" (*Halifax Mail,* 7 January 1949). Historically, the *Walnut*'s passengers form the largest group of refugee claimants to arrive by boat on the east coast of Canada, on their own volition, in the twentieth century.

Immigration officials were not aware of the fact that Manivald Sein, one of the passengers, had turned the tiny washroom in his shared sleeping quarters into a darkroom. Here, he made hundreds of copies of photographs he had taken throughout the voyage, which he sold to other passengers for ten cents each. Many of the images showed small groups of family or friends standing closely together, smiling, and looking at the camera. They were valued as mementos and as evidence of the solidarity this group had achieved through the traumas and losses they endured together. From the beginning, photography played a unique role in this migration drama. For the past sixty years, visual representations have continued to affect memories surrounding the voyage of the SS *Walnut*.

My first contact with photographs taken on the voyage was one image of the ship that my father had kept in a family photo album. He was one of the 347 passengers who arrived in Halifax that day. Throughout my childhood, I heard one or two very short snippets about my father's experiences, but in general he trivialized this period of his life. During the interviews for this project, I came to realize that downplaying traumatic experience is not uncommon. Discounting refugee experiences had been commonplace among these survivors. Many of the *Walnut*'s passengers told me that they rarely discussed the voyage at home or in wider social circles and particularly not with Canadian friends. Having been a refugee was not a part of their identity that they readily or publicly discussed.

When I was a child, my immediate family had little contact with the Estonian community in Toronto, other than occasional visits with extended family members. My father focused on being an "invisible minority." He was proud to be Estonian, but he had more of a desire to conform to Canadian culture and be seen as Canadian only. He would often say, "When in Rome, do as the Romans do." He had married a Canadian woman and did not send his children to Estonian language school, two life choices that were considered questionable by the Estonian community at the time. Consequently, I had virtually no contact with the wider Estonian community prior to beginning my fieldwork. So although my heritage in some ways positioned me as a "native" anthropologist, my personal experience did not.

During the process of gathering together the historical photos that I would come to call the *Walnut* Collection, I realized that these small black-and-white images contained missing information about an important part of my family's history and identity as well as the history and identity of the *Walnut*'s passengers. Each photograph had a story to tell, and many of the photographers told me their stories as we looked at them together. I began by analyzing their content from the perspective of an outsider for two reasons: first, only two of the photographers I spoke with were able to accurately describe the content of the photos they took, which left more than half of the images without personal contextualization; second, most of the surviving passengers I interviewed had never seen these images before. Because these images had no captions, it was difficult at any point throughout my research to identify many of the persons portrayed, exact locations, exact times, and why particular photographs had been taken.

I felt a faint personal identification with one image as I recognized my father's face in a large crowd, but could not allocate a narrative. Even after I considered the memories and stories I was subsequently told that were associated with that moment in time, this photograph held little personal meaning in relation to the snippets of information about the voyage I had grown up with.

Lila Abu-Lughod (1991) was the first anthropologist to publicly take up the challenge of critiquing cultural anthropology's lack of interest in problematizing the fact that self-other boundaries are extremely complex and impossible to pin down in the ways they were traditionally imagined. She coined the term "halfies" in her article "Writing against Culture," defining them as "people whose national and cultural identity is mixed by virtue of migration, overseas education, or parentage" (137). Kirin Narayan (1993) further challenged ideas concerning "insiderness" and "outsiderness" by arguing for a postmodern, postcolonial view of anthropological fields, which need to be seen as shifting, layered, and constantly in flux. Narayan notes that we identify with numerous communities at the same time and that these affiliations shift and change over time: "We can all walk down the same road, in time and space, but be aware of very different things" (680). The idea that communities are far more complex than just national or cultural affinities is now commonly recognized.[7] In a globalized world, there are no natives anymore, because there are "no cultural isolates" (Hastrup 1993, 175). As Sonia Ryang (2000) reminds us, ethnography is not autobiography, though they share some common ground. I do not want to privilege a discussion about my position as the daughter of one of the passengers. Suffice it to say that I came to the project as an outsider, yet, because my father had been a member of this group in 1948, I was welcomed more readily than I might have been otherwise. By allocating the function of "site" to the *Walnut* Collection, and by focusing on the multiple usages of these images in conjunction with both personal and official memories, I am hoping to make a more innovative contribution to anthropological and sociological studies in regard to the ethnographic uses of photography and its multifarious links to memory. As an outsider and scholarly reader of these images, I stand on the divide between memory and photography in search of the inter-relational, and non-relational, counterpoints of both. Yet, as the daughter of one of the passengers, I found that the inconsequential, imagined event I had made up in my head from three very short childhood stories did come to life through myriad images, stories, and my new relationship with the Estonian community to create a striking portrait of this voyage.

Photography, Memory, and Identity

An emphasis on social systems pertaining to photographic images has been of primary concern in anthropology following the premise that the visual content of photographs is created and read through social conventions or social codes.[8] This approach does not place a singular focus on what is seen but includes and highlights the unseen systems of circulation, exchange, and sorting that are most critical in recognizing the importance of photography as a mechanism that aids in the production of memory and identity. At its core is an examination of photographs as apparatuses that inspire social discourses (Edwards 2001, 28). Added to that is the notion that photographs are socially recognized as objects engraved with visual tracings of memories. Yet photographs cannot narrate; knowledge is not stored in photographs but allotted to them through the various ways they are read and linked to ideas about memory.

Deborah Poole's (1997) definition of visual economy is based on understanding how photographs are reproduced and organized by people, how they organize people, and how social actions have a direct relationship with the political atmosphere and the class structure of a society. In *Vision, Race and Modernity,* she uses this concept to interrogate networks of visual images that have structured modern ideas about Andean countries. Her choice of the word "economy" is intentional not only for its insistence on the systematic nature of social organization that affects and is affected by politics and class, but also for its suggestion of global movements that affect national and cultural boundaries (80). In *Raw Histories* (2001), Elizabeth Edwards ethnographically interrogates various archival collections through her use of the term "social biographies." Her theoretical stance differs from Poole's insistence that "the physical nature of photography allows for the representational quality of photography to function" (16). Here, physicality is given preference over content. Edwards also provides a more focused emphasis on social meanings as opposed to political and economic ramifications. In understanding the basic tenets of "social biography," one must note that even though every photograph is made for a reason, it is also always created with a clear biographical intention in mind, primarily to communicate the past in the future (14). In this way, the assumed passivity of photographs is erased in favour of an understanding of how they create relationships between people, with an obvious repercussion being that political agency can be enabled through the ways photographs manipulate and are manipulated as objects. By linking Edwards's theory about social biography with Poole's concept of visual economy, we can understand how the circulatory nature and sorting practices common to photographs, as objects, can have political and global ramifications as well as individualized, social ramifications. It is also possible to construct a theoretical base that emphasizes the active, relational nature of photographs as objects that carry visual information and create layers of social meaning.[9] Histories and identities, both personal and official, are created through the entanglements inherent to the life of a photograph, even though the visual content of individual images does not precisely narrate either.

Understanding the various processes integral to the production of identity is a difficult one, first, because it is always evolving and changing and, second, because the establishment of identity is dependent on innumerable personal and official versions of "truth," time, and space. Photography offers an invaluable means of expression for struggles in the production of identity because it allows for multiple instances of performativity. Identity is, in effect, shaped through a conversation between the "snapping" of photographs, the "saving" of photographs (including both visual and physical manipulation), the circulation of photographs, and the "reading" of photographs. Meanings implied through this conversation are inverted and derailed frequently within a multilayered, dialogical system based on remembering. Photographs provide a space where identities are negotiated and a flexible and accessible place for their performance. This feature allows for fluent and seemingly well-formed expressions of collectivity and individuality to emerge.

The elicitation of myriad memories is perhaps the most remarkable result of the confluence of meanings photographs can and do influence. On a fundamental level, "collective memory" is based on understanding that it is only individuals who remember. Their memories are perceived through jointly understood frameworks, where objects and symbols are mutually valued and communicated through social conventions and encoding/decoding processes (Halbswach [1951] 1980). In this sense, stored and shared knowledge can be aligned with conventional notions about storytelling such that the visual content of photographs becomes the framework that inspires past experience to enliven a social response filled with historical details. Theories pertaining to "collective memory" suggest that groups actually have an identity, and a way of acting as an entity, that can be distinguished from collections of symbols and objects. Here, the dialogic nature of communication is again emphasized, only this time with the outcome described as a "supra-individual phenomenon" (Olick 1999, 343). Jeffery Olick advocates for a theoretical stance that demonstrates interactions between the "collective" versus the "collected."[10] He claims that in reality there is no reappearance of "experience in its original form" but only the "cobbling together of a new memory" each time a story is told (340). Even when memories are read through a form of communication based on socially understood mnemonic forms that are group specific, such as family photo albums, they are also creatively altered, misunderstood, and misread through the same means. Each reading is a little bit different than the last because it is also based on personal experiences. All readings are similar because of individual claims on cultural and historical knowledge. It is important to remember that traces of cultural and historical information are inherent to photographic images yet impossible to fully interrogate without accompanying information concerning the photographer's intentions. Through transferences that take place between memory and photography, we can see how the materiality of photography allows for the perpetuation of socially imposed meanings as well as the creation of new, personalized ideas about space, identity, and time.

To date, there have been few studies that explore the relationship between visuality, memory, and other social and personal issues related to refugee identity. No one has specifically focused on the combined role that photography and memory play within a web of representation or how these two combine to facilitate the formation of knowledge and power that circulates between private and public realms in the construction of ideas about refugees. The power of visuality and its ability to communicate power and knowledge – as discussed by Michel Foucault (1979) and more specifically in terms of photography by Susan Sontag (1979), John Berger (1980), and Roland Barthes (1984) – have yet to be applied to studies of forced migration in a comprehensive manner. In 1995, Liisa Malkki stated, "Pictures of refugees are now a key vehicle in the elaboration of a transnational social imagination of refugees" (234). She was referring to a variety of venues, including NGOs, government and refugee relief agencies, and the media. Malkki claims that visual media, including photography, work to dehistoricize refugees and render them speechless and helpless. Other scholars have emphasized the role that photojournalists play in visually constructing stereotypes about refugees. Despite claiming to promote humanitarianism, they also create a social memory about war based on universal tropes of suffering.[11] Leo Spitzer's *Hotel Bolivia: A Culture of Memory in a Refuge from Nazism* (1998) provides a rare first-hand perspective concerning the analysis of a photo album. The album in question documents Spitzer's family, Austrian refugees, crossing from central Europe to South America in 1939. He primarily discusses his personal impressions, as a young person, of photos that at first glance do not suggest a voyage of displacement and escape but that mean something different, in terms of refugee identity, when he finds hidden commentaries written by his father on the back of each image in later life (52-57). Spitzer's account suggests that there are other collections of photographs taken by refugees in transit, perhaps hidden in private collections or family albums that have yet to be brought into public view.

Photographs are a powerful tool in the production of identity, both through social conventions and as individualized disruptions to social conventions. The *Walnut* Collection offers a unique perspective on refugee identity because it consists of photographic images taken by individuals while they experienced ordeals associated with forced migration. They are objects that bear witness to refugee movement between geographical places and objects that have been moved between geographical places over time, continually providing new spaces for the performance and negotiation of identity. While the media and other publicly produced images typically depict refugees as massive throngs of silent victims, photographs taken from a personal perspective challenge this general politicizing of humanitarianism. While public representations often depict powerless female refugees alone with their children, personal photos present active individuals participating in their life experiences with the support of husbands, other family members, and friends. The *Walnut* Collection visually reminds us, as did the photographs taken by Leo Spitzer's family while in transit, that those who are labelled "refugees" converse, argue, tell jokes, play games, flirt, listen to music, sing songs, and take photographs (Spitzer 1998, 60).

The movement of photographs depicting the *Walnut*'s voyage, as material objects, is clearly demarcated by both temporal and spatial dimensions, which allow for the creation of ideas about space and movement. This has political ramifications linked to the formation of identity, particularly when they are transferred between personal and more public and official realms. This book concerns itself with problematizing the porous nature of photographic representation as it slides between memory and image. Throughout, I will show that photographs allow for collisions between public and private imaginings, junctures where memories collide and create interesting places for discussions about identity.

In the same way that memory and photography are considered ambiguous in nature and vulnerable to manipulation, identity is also elusive in its formations over time. At one end, national identity involves knowing, being, and understanding the world as a whole and the self, as a member of various segments of a community (Billig 1995, 65). Identity in this context essentially becomes an understanding of the boundaries of belonging, even though patterns of ideas and institutions are often not conducive to the interests or activities of the individuals involved (Bell 2003, 76; Assman 1995, 130). At the other end of the spectrum, familial identity revolves around banal, everyday practices, subjective interpretations of stereotypes, and adverse reactions to hegemony. In *Realms of Memory,* Pierre Nora (1996) describes generations as groups bound by time and space through public, social interactions, including media reports, schools, music, and art events that are not necessarily political in nature. He describes these interactions as "fabricators of *lieux de memoiré* or mnemonic sites" (526) and says that their effect on the construction of individual identities is both definitively collective and provisional. For Nora, sites in which identity is negotiated through memory include oral narratives, a wide variety of documented text-based materials, and photographs. This is where, in the collective nature of generational and familial identity, "'I' is simultaneously 'we'" in unconscious ways (526).

Specifically, the *Walnut* Collection allows for interpretations and conversations about refugee identity, a specific and often obscure form of collective identity that crosses social and cultural boundaries, places, and time as well as demonstrating the flow of meanings between all of these factors. By looking at both personal and official discourses that are linked to a single collection of photographs, we can see a range of interpretations that not only express stereotypes about "refugees" but also influence subjective comments about the experiences associated with forced migration and, subsequently, the identities of the individuals involved. Berger defined private photographs as those that are intended to contribute to a living memory in the same context in which they were taken. They are mementos from a life being lived that respect the laws of memory. Further, he explained that once private photographs were used in public realms, they were severed from all lived experience and could be considered dead objects only (1980, 56, 60). This book challenges the notion of a black-and-white divide between the meaning and values of photography as they are linked to memory in public and private realms. It explains how photographs taken by the *Walnut*'s passengers and their conversations about these photos express contradictions, tensions, and myriad perspectives about what it means to be labelled a refugee. The memories and stories linked to these depictions are consequently rich with possibilities for understanding the complexities and incongruities associated with the "ethnographicness" of photography.

The Photographers and Their Photographs

The *Walnut* photos were taken between November 1948 and March 1949. All are black and white and were taken with thirty-five millimetre Kodachrome film. They had an original print size of two inches by three inches (five by seven centimetres). Some depict families waiting en masse in habours, posed together in small groups, lined up waiting to board the ship, or milling around near the pier at Göteborg. In all, there are approximately one hundred photographs taken on board the SS *Walnut* while it was crossing the Atlantic. They show various work activities, sleeping accommodations, and social gatherings. Several images depict the stopover in Sligo, Ireland, and another large collection of images depicts time spent in detention centres in Halifax between 13 December 1948 and March 1949. Manivald Sein was responsible for creating almost half of the collection I compiled during my research.

Sein was nineteen when he boarded the *Walnut*. He turned twenty while crossing the Atlantic. There were three things he said he had dreamed of owning while living in Estonia: "a camera, a fountain pen, and a watch, a good watch" (Sein, interview with author). These objects were unavailable during the Second World War, but while living and working in Sweden he managed to acquire all three. Mr. Sein was well known within this group as the guy who was always walking around with a camera on his shoulder. When asked why he took photos of the voyage, Sein made no claims of serious journalistic or political intentions and described himself as an amateur photographer only. He said that he always had his camera with him and was "just in the habit of taking photographs wherever he went" and whenever he could. His declared original intentions were not to formally document this voyage but to take photos for his own personal use as mementos of the trip; however, while in detention at Pier 21 for over two months, he did decide to sell copies to other passengers, to make a bit of pocket money and because at that point other passengers were interested in acquiring keepsakes of their journey. For him, it was mostly "just fun connecting with the people."

In 1998, Sein was approached by Holly Preston, a producer with the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC), and asked whether his photographs could be used in a documentary video for a History Television series and the soon-to-be-opened Pier 21 Museum. To date, these images constitute the primary source material for this museum's exhibit concerning the voyage of the SS *Walnut*. Some of Sein's original photographs have been reformatted and made into short videos with added voice-over commentary and visual embellishments. They are also used in conjunction with an educational program designed for grades 6 to 9 titled "Reporting on the *Walnut*." This more official use of Sein's photographs is emblematic of the ease with which photos, as objects that frequently circulate between a variety of realms, facilitate the interconnections between, and the production of, social and individual memories.

Two smaller collections of personal photos (twenty to thirty images) belonged to Max Kalm and Enno Lauri. These photographers claimed that their original intention was to simply document the trip for family and friends. Their images had not been circulated outside the photographer's families until they were offered to me for viewing and I began discussing and circulating them with other surviving passengers. Copies have been kept for personal use, and several were donated to the Pier 21 Museum in the early twenty-first century. Another larger collection includes approximately eighty images, which were created by Joann Saarniit.

Saarniit is a well-known Estonian painter who brought a collection of over forty oil paintings depicting his experiences in Siberia with him on the *Walnut*. Through his art, Saarniit wished to inform all Canadians about the horrors of the Soviet regime (Saarniit 1983, 18). He was also responsible for the creation of two photo albums that were given to the Red Cross in Halifax and Canadian immigration officials as a gesture of gratitude from all of the *Walnut*'s passengers. Each album contains approximately forty photographs that he took during the voyage. They create a photo-journal of the trip, including titles, text, and symbolic motifs, starting with the train trip to Göteborg, Sweden, and ending with the group's arrival in Halifax. A commemorative page states, "With our best thanks for all kindness and friendly treatment, we have the pleasure to present you some pictures about the voyage for a kind of memory of the people arrived with WALNUT to Halifax. We are happy to find our new homes in Canada and our friends in Canadians" (Saarniit 1949). Interestingly, none of the passengers who partook in this study had ever heard of, or seen, either album. Mr. Saarniit's surviving family members were also not aware of the album's existence. He passed away several years ago, before I began my research. Therefore, his personal intention in producing these two albums remains unclear. They visually express gratitude, on behalf of all the *Walnut*'s passengers, towards Canadian immigration officials and the Red Cross for aid received upon their arrival in Canada.

All three photographers, mentioned above, gladly gave me permission to circulate copies of the images they had created in 1948. Sharing and exchanging information and photos became an important part of the interview process. I was allowed access to a variety of personal archives in several interviewees' homes. Access often seemed to be spurred by the fact that I was sharing photographs already in my possession. This part of my research was very indirect and randomly executed because it was motivated by the wishes and intentions of the participants. Often, before my arrival, they would gather together the photographs that they wanted me to see. These had been kept hidden over the years in a variety of formats from personal albums to tattered envelopes and old boxes. Some of the images I was shown were copies bought from Sein while living in detention at Pier 21. As I have mentioned, many interviewees had never seen photographs of their voyage. When I began interviewing surviving passengers in 2006, most of them did not know that such an extensive and diverse collection existed; several owned one or two of Sein's reproductions, and only a few of the passengers had larger collections. These photographs were kept in formal albums along with newspaper clippings. All of the photos that constitute the *Walnut* Collection were given to me freely; the owners were glad to make them available for this study.

Responses and Remembering

All the survivors were between the ages of sixty-five and ninety-five when they agreed to be interviewed. Working with those in the senior years of their life was very rewarding. There were few time constraints, and I always felt that my interest was welcomed. Most offered to meet me in their homes, where they often greeted me with a meal or coffee. These in-home sessions were conducive to quiet and uninterrupted viewings of photographs and photo albums. Each interview began with a conversation about their flight from Estonia in 1944 and the incidents that led to their boarding the *Walnut* in 1948.[12] Throughout, my intention was to create a relaxed atmosphere in which sharing photographs and information about the voyage set the stage for remembering. Together, we looked at large photo-boards, upon which I had arranged a collection of fifty-five images in collage fashion with approximately ten photos on each board. My sorting criteria were based on eliminating repeated images (those with similar visual content) to create a collection that was comprehensive yet small enough to facilitate a two-to-three-hour interview. For the surviving passengers who were now in their senior years, there seemed to be a strong desire to tell stories and to share information about this experience regardless of the fact that they were often viewing photographs depicting their voyage for the first time.

Following the photo-viewing segment of the first interviews, I asked each interviewee several questions related to their retrospective view of themselves in relationship to nationalism and in regard to the terms "refugee" and "boat person." The latter term was used because of its prevalence in comments made by members of this group at reunion celebrations and in our conversations. Several of the participants called themselves "the first boat people to come to Canada" in our first meeting. The overall nature of responses to questions about national identity was diverse and suggested a tension in the mitigation of past and present identities. Discrepancies between self-representation and collective representation were also conveyed. For example, some self-identified as "real refugees," while others claimed they were never refugees, preferring to view their past experiences as touristic in nature. Most identified with a hybrid form of Canadian/Estonian national identity but had mixed feelings and thoughts about what it really meant to "live in two worlds" (Nyman, interview with author). Several participants were insulted when I asked whether they identified with the term "boat people."

Approximately two months following the first set of interviews, during which we looked at the *Walnut* Collection primarily in one-on-one sessions, I conducted a second set of interviews in small groups of two to four people. These meetings were generally shorter, with fewer questions, and they revolved around the presentation of a video, which is a central component of the *Walnut* exhibit at the Pier 21 Museum.[13] The video animates thirty-two of Sein's photographs to create a filmic rendition of the voyage in the fashion of Ken Burns's work, which will be discussed further in Chapter 3. Questions focused on reflections and critiques. Only one of the participants interviewed at this time had been to the museum, so my intention was to expose the others to the various visual elements at the museum that were related to their voyage. Small group discussions provided a semi-public atmosphere, which seemed appropriate as we interrogated this public rendition of their past experience. We watched the video together two to three times to allow for subtleties to be digested, as interviewees were often emotionally overwhelmed following the first viewing. In general, looking at photographs and talking about photographs, whether as stills or as stills transposed into a filmic rendition, had an enriching influence on the interview processes.

In 1986, John Collier and Malcolm Collier outlined in detail the importance of photo-elicitation for anthropologists. In *Visual Anthropology: Photography as a Research Method* (1986, 99), they argued that sharing and viewing photographs not only creates an immediate point of access and encourages interviewees to take the lead in enquiries but also leads to discussions about "unfamiliar, unforeseen environments and subjects." The prevalence of emotional reactions induced by photography was brought forward as an important yet delicate issue for researchers. They claimed that when photos were used in the interview process, the emotional value and significance was evident, even though the visual content may not have provided personal or subjective insights. In this context, Collier and Collier (1986, 131) found that "photographs are charged with unexpected emotional material that triggers intense feelings." To date, scholars have frequently commented on the ways this method encourages emotional responses.[14] However, there has yet to be a study that focuses exclusively on the breadth and depth of emotions elicited by or accompanying sensory memories.

In general, throughout the interviews with the *Walnut*'s passengers, it seemed as though memories, and their associated emotions, were accessed quickly and often comprehensively by photos. Interviewees frequently got excited over certain photos. They explained how these images represented forgotten memories or something they had been trying to explain verbally minutes earlier. The photographs also surprisingly triggered memories that were often not part of the subject matter of the actual image, visceral in nature and often linked to senses other than vision. For example, a partial view of the deck of the SS *Walnut* elicited a long story about teasing seagulls with pieces of meat tied to string. I was told that this story had been completely forgotten until that moment of viewing. Also, the strong smell of oranges rotting on the deck was elicited from a similar photograph. Looking at and talking about the *Walnut* Collection also generally aided in creating a more receptive atmosphere for discussing traumatic experiences and losses incurred prior to, during, and following the voyage.

Having said that, an important issue apparent to me from the outset was the fact that a few of the participants were not interested in looking at these photographs at all and several were much less interested than I thought they would be. Occasionally, looking at this collection rekindled powerful, negative feelings about the ordeals associated with their voyage. A few individuals avoided looking for an extended period of time; some turned away or left the room for a few moments instead of focusing on the photographs when I presented them. My experience with this method demonstrated that the photo-elicitation process can noticeably elicit or unblock highly emotional memories and lead to confusion or tension during the interview process. When this happens, the process of creating an intimate connection between the anthropologist and the interviewee is interrupted and, more importantly, the interviewee may lose the opportunity to feel connected to his or her own memories. When photographs that depict past traumatic experiences are examined during the interview process, researchers must be cognizant of both of these effects and be prepared to deal with various levels of emotional expression. Therefore, photo-elicitation is not necessarily a process that inevitably leads to greater understandings and/or insights into deeper elements of human consciousness. As was demonstrated by the *Walnut* Collection, photographs can elicit sixty-year-old emotional and sensory memories, yet they can also reignite feelings associated with traumatic experience that shut down the desire to communicate. The potential of photography to redefine the research relationship and allow for the joint exploration of meanings, emotions, and memories can relocate both researcher and interviewee to a mysterious, complex, and delicate terrain.

If I were to generalize about the *Walnut*'s passengers' interest in and response to this particular set of photographs, I would have to say that there were two different types of reactions. The first can be linked to Barbara Myerhoff's work with Holocaust survivors in her article "Life History among the Elderly: Performance, Visibility, and Re-membering" (1982), in which she discusses individual expressions of remembering. For a few of the *Walnut*'s passengers, a personal aggregation of mementos of past life events restored purpose, function, culture, and value. These individuals were also very committed to the practice of preserving a wide array of textual and visual materials about Estonia, and, like the Holocaust survivors in Myerhoff's study, took pride in retaining their culture and traditions, adding to the notion that they were outliving their oppressors. As one participant stated, "And like you see I have always worked in the Estonian community. This is something that you do outside of being Canadian. This is like your hobby almost. My hobby is speaking the Estonian language, keeping the Estonian culture, all of that and especially when the Russians had taken over and the Estonians were not able to do it. We had to keep that alive and this is what our hobby was, it was to keep the culture alive" (Nyman, interview with author). They save and protect stories, books, newspaper articles, and photographs about the SS *Walnut*'s voyage in the hope that there will be an interest in future generations. These participants were very helpful in providing me with research materials. Overall, their efforts to memorialize this voyage can be aligned with Myerhoff's sentiment (1982, 111): "Re-membered lives are moral documents and their function is salvific, inevitably implying, 'All this has not been for nothing.'"

As well, many within this group identified closely with the photographs and told stories about the voyage while viewing them. They were conscious of the importance of their role as memory bearers. They were eager to be recorded and typically loved retelling stories about their experience. A standard joke among this group was, "You know, we were the first Canadian boat people." This catchy label was expressed in humorous tones to stress the uniqueness of their experience while designating a historically noteworthy collective identity. Their pride shone through in their ability to remember the names of those depicted in the photos. The quantity of names known legitimized the depths of each individual's connection to the group as well as the importance of this voyage to their identity over time.

The majority of the participants formed the second group. They were curious about what I was doing and wanted to tell their story for the first time. Peer pressure was one of the reasons they agreed to meet with me, but they were also ready, at a senior age, to leave a documented account of this period in their lives. They were happy that someone was interested, though they were sometimes a little hesitant to express intimate details. Most had not talked about their experiences aboard the SS *Walnut* or their prior life in Sweden and Estonia in a semi-public way before. Remembering made them feel very emotional. I was conscious throughout of the possible curative effects remembering and storytelling may have (Rosenthal 2003, 925), while also remaining cognizant of possible emotionally negative after-effects.

Only a few individuals in this group had photographs in their possession; most were seeing the bulk of the collection for the first time. Throughout these viewings, it seemed as though certain photographs triggered memories of sensory events, physical discomfort, and powerful emotions related to the trauma they had experienced in 1948. They became excited when they recognized themselves, friends, or family members. For this group in general, "photographs [were] the focus of intense emotional engagement" (Edwards 2006, 36). Nevertheless, there were a few individuals who did not recognize anybody or anything in the photographs, and a sense of confusion prevailed. One participant stated, "These are good pictures of some of the people but I don't quite recognize them. I don't recognize anything here" (Kotkas, interview with author).

These two different ways of re-engaging with photographs raise another issue related to the expression of private and public memories, which has yet to be discussed in relation to photo-elicitation methodologies. Stories are recounted, sometimes regularly, and "in the process they become part of a 'social' memory and a knowledge which is shared" (Carsten 1995, 334), but these types of remembrances are different from impulsive memories. The subtleties concerning what constitutes a private, personal memory versus public or semi-public memories are individualized and often impossible for a researcher to conclusively detect. A few of the *Walnut*'s passengers from the first segment of the group I mentioned above had been interviewed in the past or had performed public renditions of their memories about the voyage at reunion get-togethers. They had stock stories that they told about the trip. Several of these stories were given to me in the form of textual speeches, journal notes, and media articles. Occasionally, while we were looking at the photographs together, they would repeat these stories. This also happened while we were watching the Pier 21 Museum video. Rarely, versions of the same story were told to me by different people and it was obvious that these stories had circulated among friends at reunion parties. Yet, in most instances, it was difficult to tell the difference between a well-told story and a more unprompted memory. I am assuming that memories told to me in hushed tones, or whispered, were considered private and had not been repeated frequently. On a few occasions, memories were qualified as something that had never been told to anyone before or something not to be included in my project. Nevertheless, sometimes it was difficult to definitively qualify the overall effect that the photo-elicitation process was having on the performance of memory at this level.

Few anthropologists have taken up studies involving photo-elicitation methods in combination with historical photographs. Perhaps, as Jay Ruby (2005) claims, the assumption is that the people who made and used older photographs are no longer alive, and, therefore, an ethnographic study of these photos' use and meaning could only be undertaken using the methodologies of an ethnohistorian. My focus here partially follows several fieldwork studies that use historical photographs to reinstate lost identities through the retrieval of memories. The most notable is Laura Peers and Alison Brown's book *"Pictures Bring Us Messages"/Sinaakssiiksi aohtsimaahpihkookiyaawa: Photographs and Histories from the Kainai Nation* (2006), though it specifically focuses on visual repatriation as an offshoot of photo-elicitation.[15] Similarly, most of the *Walnut* passengers I spoke with had no prior knowledge of this collection of photographs, yet it is questionable whether they relished the reinstatement of their past identities as refugees. Although this process was definitely focused on "reviving and affirming family and community-based histories," the results were not necessarily as positive as those outlined by Brown and Peers, where Kainai community members gained a renewed sense of control over their lives (139). For this Estonian group, looking at old photographs about their voyage on the SS *Walnut* reminded them of a time in their lives that was difficult, traumatic, and filled with uncertainty, a time that did not necessarily fit well with their contemporary identity as Canadian citizens. However, remembering through photographs did inspire the communal sense of an "accidental community," a term coined by Malkki (1997a) that had some fond associations linked to it.

Situating the *Walnut* Collection

The subject of forced migration has a very long pictorial history dating back to the early fifteenth century (Wright 2002, 57), and contemporary media representations of refugees in the form of "photographic portrayals" are profuse (Malkki 1995a, 9). Nevertheless, there has yet to be an academic spotlight on specific circulations of photographic images of refugees, never mind a collection of photographs taken by refugees while they were in transit. As well, several studies have specifically looked at visual representations of refugees,[16] yet there have been few that approach historical photographs by thinking about them as a possible means for collaborative learning about refugee identity. This book is unique in its approach for four reasons. First, anthropologists have been giving their informants cameras to visually document their environments for over twenty years, and currently there is a growing trend in the use of this methodology (Nakamura 2008, 20), including studies that specifically focus on refugee identity.[17] This book differs substantially from that practice because of the use of historical photos, a set of images produced primarily for personal use sixty years ago. Second, as an anthropologist, I was intimately involved at every stage of the photo-elicitation process that formed a large part of my research, research in which personal memories played a critical role in understanding the complex meanings imbedded within photographs. Third, there is a secondary focus on understanding the cultural and social importance that these same photographs acquired in a national museum setting. And finally, this book explains how the *Walnut* Collection allowed for insights into a retrospective view of the experience of being a refugee, including a particular relationship to national identity.

This account takes readers on a chronological journey to highlight the importance of time to the alterations of meanings and memories associated with photographs. The first two chapters focus on contextualizing two different sets of historical photographs that have come to represent this voyage. The work begins with a content analysis of the images taken aboard the *Walnut* in 1948 and while the passengers lived in detention in Halifax. Chapter 2 initiates a conversation about the "refugee gaze" as a unique way to understand the visual content of the photographs taken by the passengers themselves. These photographs provide a rare visual perspective, a glimpse into the realities of life aboard a crowded minesweeper, including a focus on intimate relationships between those who shared this life-altering experience. Generally speaking, these images do not portray or resemble stereotypical categories or visual representations allotted to refugees. Instead, they provide an intimate photographic illustration of individuals who are between national identities, legal protection, economic stability, and two continents. A noteworthy feature is that the majority of these images do not visually depict trauma, even though they were created by individuals who were experiencing multiple traumatic stressors. Chapter 3 analyzes Canadian press photographs published about the *Walnut*'s arrival in late 1948 and the months that followed, in conjunction with comments made by Canadian immigration officials. Here, the *Walnut*'s passengers were promoted as "good types," or desirable future citizens, based on their northern heritage and noticeably white skin. Images depicting women and small children portrayed them as docile yet happy and healthy. These themes in no way follow stereotypical media discourses that position refugees who arrive by boat as a threat to national security.

In 1999, the Pier 21 Museum was built under a mandate to marry emotion with technology in order to simulate "the feeling of a 'real' immigration experience" for those who came to Canada and who will come to Canada (Zorde 2001, 61). Chapter 4 focuses on an analysis of a three-and-a-half-minute video, the central element of a permanent exhibit about the *Walnut*'s voyage at this museum. The video was inspired by, and is designed around, the photographs taken by Manivald Sein, yet it visually supports an "official" interpretation of Canadian nationalism. It provides an apt example of how cultural and social meanings can change when photographs are reused in different venues, in different formats, and for specific audiences.

Chapter 5 provides an ethnographic account of the performative viewing of the *Walnut* Collection, which took place during our interviews, beginning in 2006. The surviving passengers shared a wide range of stories and personal memories while we looked at photographs of the voyage. Within a dominant narrative about loss, trauma, and victimization, a complex interweave of counter-narratives emerged. This aspect adds to understandings about the richness of photographs in their ability to elicit diverse, multifaceted meanings, which depend on who is doing the looking. In contrast to details about personal memories, Chapter 6 focuses on the surviving passengers' interpretation of the Pier 21 Museum's rendition of their voyage as well as retrospective views concerning shifts in their personal identity over time. Specifically, it analyzes personal comments about contemporary public identities as evidenced through a retrospective view of their past experiences as "refugees" and as "boat people," and it discusses similarities and differences in the passengers' visceral responses to the reformatted images presented in the Pier 21 Museum video. Our often explicit conversations about refugee identity and nationalism demonstrated how the interpretation and use of photography affects social and cultural identity over time and has the power to straddle the gap between personal expressions of refugee experiences and national agendas.

To conclude, I move forward to the *Walnut* passengers' sixtieth reunion in 2008 and explain in detail the group response to my presentation concerning the historical contextualization of their journey and several themes that were made evident during our conversations, specifically, discussions about the permanent exhibit at the Pier 21 Museum and accompanying educational programs. Here, it is made obvious that the legacy of the *Walnut* Collection continues and that the continual use of and reengagement with these photographs adds to their importance as objects of ethnographic interest. Also, emotion is integral to understanding how memory and photography operate in conjunction with the production of identity. As Sara Ahmed (2004, 26) states, emotions "align individuals with collectives – or bodily space with social space." In my conclusion, I argue that photographs serve that same function and that remembering with photographs over time enhances this function, which is remarkable in this instance because it allowed for the reformation of an "accidental community of memory" (Malkki 1997a, 91), where particular, temporary experiences are reimagined, profoundly felt, and central to feelings of social and generational bondedness.

As stated in the Preface, this book emphasizes the "ethnographicness" of the *Walnut* Collection and how it converges with various aspects of memory to create a space where refugee identity in relation to this experience is negotiated over time and across geographical spaces. Photographs taken during the *Walnut*'s passengers' voyage in 1948 are objects that bear witness to refugee movement and objects that have moved between localities. The longevity and profusion of their use facilitates various constructions of identity. As objects, they demonstrate how technologies of memory can be applied over time to photographs. Even though the experience of being a refugee was temporary for this group, the creation of social and cultural meanings about the *Walnut*'s passengers and their journey is continually reinvented through these images. Re-engagements with the *Walnut* Collection have occurred on a variety of levels. Re-engagements have allowed geographical spaces, nations, and family relationships, as well as ideas about protection, rights, and recognition, to be imagined and reimagined. Consequently, the *Walnut* Collection provides a place where the potential seeds of new social meanings and cultural values reside as well.

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