

Anitra Halliday
Latvian Displaced
Person
General Stuart
Heintzelman
1950



I recently saw a special on Pier 21 on T.V. and I had the same reaction as everyone who passed through there; a lump in my throat.

I was 7 years old when I came to Canada with my mother on the General Stuart Heinzelman. My father had arrived the year before on the Samaria. We were refugees from Latvia and spent 6 years in refugee camps before we came to Canada in 1950. I remember much of the trip on the ship, the crowded conditions, the rocking motion and the frightening tall waves during a storm. We were so relieved to arrive in Canada. I remember how everyone's mood lifted and we left Halifax on the train for Montreal. People ran out to pick flowers in the fields when we made stops and decorated the railway car.

Pier 21 has deep meaning for me. I was never able to identify where I came from as a child. Canadians didn't know where Latvia was. I always wondered which hospital I had been born in because my friends named off theirs so easily - the Montreal General, the Jewish General. Now I can identify a place where I 'became' a Canadian, Pier 21. If you are keeping names, we are:

Juris Beikmanis (now deceased)
Arija Beikmane (now deceased)
Anitra Beikmane (myself)

Thank you so much for this meaningful project.

