



Remembering Refuge

Between Sanctuary and Solidarity

What are Provocations?

Provocations are the questions that lie at the heart of conversations about migration and borders, but that often are not made explicit. The provocations emerged from the overarching themes that developed out of the team's engagement with the oral histories. They are points of entry that both inform and are informed by the oral histories and are meant to provoke critical thinking and engagement.

Provocation: Whose stories are told about the border and by whom?

Rarely do we reflect on who is allowed to speak about border crossing and which voices are excluded. This provocation encourages you to ask:

- Consider what you know about the Canada-US border. What do you know about its history?
- Which histories and memories are recorded, while others are forgotten or silenced? Who tells the stories about migration across it?
- How are borders imagined and how are border stories told differently by those that cross them, local communities, solidarity groups, faith-based groups, and the nation-states that seek to control them?
- How does the way stories are told influence our connection to them and our willingness to engage?





From the Remembering Refuge Archive

At rememberingrefuge.com/oral-histories, you can explore a collection of oral histories where individuals share their experiences of crossing the Canada-US border to seek refuge, along with accounts from advocates in border communities. The following excerpts have been chosen for their relevance to the provocation “Whose stories are told about the border and by whom?” and can be used to reflect on the questions it raises.

Key moments from the oral histories:

Janet 00:04:32 - 00:05:44

Juliana 00:56:18 - 00:58:57

June 00:28:48 - 00:30:31

Roberto 00:27:35 - 00:31:28

To access the key moments, follow the steps listed below:

1. Go to rememberingrefuge.com
2. Go to “Oral histories”.
3. Scroll to find the oral history you’re looking for, and click on it.
 - a. Note: Some oral histories may include a trigger warning. Click the play button to continue.
4. Inside the story, click “Explore X’s story” located at the top of the page to view a list of Key Moments from the oral history.
5. Scroll through the Key Moments to find the timestamp you’re looking for and click on it. This will take you to that moment in the audio.
6. To play the story, click on the play button in the bottom-left corner of the page.



Education Resource

At rememberingrefuge.com/education, you can find education resources designed to activate the counter-archive by encouraging learners to engage with the stories meaningfully and consider how the knowledge can be applied beyond the classroom. The following materials were selected for their relevance to the provocation “Whose stories are told about the border and by whom?” and can be used to reflect on the questions it raises.

Education Resource:
Rethinking Borders

To access the education resources, follow the steps listed below:

1. Go to rememberingrefuge.com
2. Go to “Education”.
3. Scroll to find the education resource you’re looking for, and click on it.
4. Once inside you can view the online version or download the PDF.



What have other people said about this question?

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, *The danger of a single story*, 2009

https://www.ted.com/talks/chimamanda_ngozi_adichie_the_danger_of_a_single_story?language=en

Borders and Belonging, *Season 3, Episode 5: False Narratives with Real Consequences: The Impact of Social Media Disinformation on Migration Policy*, 2025

<https://www.torontomu.ca/cerc-migration/borders-and-belonging/#!/tab-1736798585046-ep--5>

Tiffany Chung, *Maps of memory*, 2016

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ffp0cOCg_M0

Karolina Nikielska-Sekula, *Visual Portrayals of Migrants as Threats or Victims Are Reductive—But Can Have Far-Reaching Impact*, 2025

<https://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/visual-portrayals-migration>

Want to learn more about the project? Visit rememberingrefuge.com