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## **SHIRLEY PECK BARNES PAPERS, 1967-2005**

### **Collection Type**

Personal Papers

### **Extent**

5.25 linear feet (ca.10,500 pages)

### **Record Type**

Textual

### **Access**

Open. Some items are temporarily restricted under terms of the donor's deed of gift, a copy of which is available on request, or under National Archives and Records Administration general restrictions (36 CFR 1256).

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## **Processed by**

Meghan Lyon, June 2008; Revised by Tim Holtz, March 2014.

## **Scope and Content Note**

Shirley Peck Barnes was a hospital administrator in Denver, Colorado, during the Vietnam War, and offered her facility and services to the Friends of Children of Vietnam (FCVN) adoption agency in April and May, 1975. FCVN was a participating agency in Operation Babylift, a coordinated evacuation of Vietnamese and Vietnamese-American babies and children during the fall of Saigon and the withdrawal of American troops. The airlift began in late March, 1975, when Edward Daly, owner of the World Airways airline, flew 50 orphans out of Vietnam on an unauthorized but widely celebrated flight. Daly was presented by the media as a hero who had finally taken charge in an increasingly desperate situation. Soon thereafter, President Ford approved Operation Babylift, an Agency for International Development (State Department) plan to airlift an estimated 3000 orphan children to the United States to be adopted by American families. The Ford White House was not involved in the planning of Operation Babylift.

At the time, the Babylift was a novel and somewhat controversial approach. The public was fascinated by the media coverage of planes full of babies arriving in the

United States. Some viewed the evacuation of Vietnamese orphans as a rescue, and saw their adoption as a chance at a better life. Because many of the orphans had been fathered by American soldiers, there were fears that the Viet Cong would kill the children when South Vietnam was taken over by the communists. Others considered the airlift the equivalent of abduction, and in the years following, there were several lawsuits by Vietnamese refugees to recover their children who had been placed in orphanages for safekeeping, and then inadvertently sent to the United States and adopted.

Although Barnes was on the periphery for much of the administration of Operation Babylift, her involvement in caring for some of the children upon their arrival in Denver deeply touched and inspired her. In the decades following, Barnes kept in close contact with adoptees and other participants of Operation Babylift. She eventually researched and wrote a book about the airlift, titled *The War Cradle*, which was published in 2000. She also participated in a World Airways reunion tour and traveled with other Babylift participants to Vietnam in 2005. Barnes died in 2007.

#### Scope and Content Note

The collection is useful for researchers interested in learning more about Operation Babylift, particularly its portrayal and coverage by the American media. The Magazine and Newspaper Clippings series brings together multiple viewpoints and perspectives on the Babylift, which could be beneficial to researchers looking for an overview of the nation's reaction to the event.

There are also several files in the Subject series relating to the operations and activities of the Friends of Children of Vietnam (FCVN) adoption agency, which may offer insight into the organization's mission and understanding of its role during the Vietnam War. FCVN newsletters and internal correspondence could be helpful for researchers wanting to know more about the events preceding Operation Babylift.

Another highlight of the collection is the LeeSanne Buchanan materials, which pre-dates Operation Babylift but is quite informative in understanding the process of international adoption in the 1960s. Buchanan eventually became president of the FCVN and worked with Vietnamese orphanages through the early 1970s, but appears to have left the organization before the commencement of Operation

Babylift. The Buchanan material overlaps some of the FCVN material contained in the Barnes Subject series; both series offer insight into the condition of Vietnamese orphanages and the role of the FCVN and other charities in the final years of the war.

The Barnes Papers are not particularly revealing about the role played by Barnes herself during Operation Babylift. Most documentation dating from 1975 is either photocopies of original documents or does not relate to Barnes' personal work. Much of her personal correspondence dates from 2000 onward, and discusses contemporary Babylift events and exhibits rather than reflecting on her work in 1975. The materials relating to her research on *The War Cradle* are probably best understood in context of the book itself. The book is available to researchers as part of the Ford Library's book collection.

#### Related Materials (March 2014)

The library does not have extensive additional materials on Operation Babylift. Very little White House discussion or decision-making on this effort occurred. Some material appears in the White House Central Files Subject category ND 18-2/CO 165, /CO 165-1, and /CO 165-2 (Refugees/Vietnam). Scattered folders also appear in such collections as the Richard Cheney Files, the Philip Buchen Files, the John Marsh Files, the Theodore Marrs Files, and the Ron Nessen Papers. Shirley Peck Barnes' book, *The War Cradle*, is available to researchers as part of the Ford Library's book collection. The records of the Agency for International Development, the government agency that planned Operation Babylift, are held at the National Archives in Record Group 286.

#### **Last Modified Date**

2025-03-06

#### **Audiovisual Materials, 1975-2004.**

Primarily photographs related to Barnes' involvement with the group Friends of Children of Vietnam (FCVN) and "Operation Babylift." Subjects include Vietnamese children, FCVN members, and World Airways planes. This series also includes an audio CD "Waking Up American" with music by Jared Rehberg as well as six audiocassettes with recordings of meetings and other audio related to projects

about children.

Arranged in parallel to the textual materials.

### **Audiovisual Materials, 1975-2004.**

#### **Status**

#### **Title**

OPEN

[View container list for this series](#)

### **Subject File, 1974-2005.**

(Boxes 1-4, 1.3 linear feet)

Correspondence, newsletters, reports, pamphlets, publications, memorabilia, and articles relating to Barnes' involvement in Operation Babylift and her subsequent research for her book, *The War Cradle*. There is a variety of materials relating to the impact of Operation Babylift on Denver's Children's Hospital, where children were received, fostered, and adopted in April and May, 1975. These records include both original documents and photocopies acquired by Barnes, and include volunteer information, sign-in sheets, and photocopies of health records. A large portion of this series relates to the Friends of Children of Vietnam (FCVN) charity and adoption agency, which was one of the agencies authorized to participate in Operation Babylift. Barnes appears to have actively collected FCVN publications and newsletters regarding the operations of the agency and its partner orphanages in Vietnam. There is also documentation about the founding of the FCVN in the late 1960s, including photocopies of its articles of incorporation records and biographies of its founder, Theodore Gleichman. Another significant component of the subject file is Barnes' extensive notes, interviews, and drafts for *The War Cradle*. This material is largely undated and often incomplete, with many pages missing. There are also a number of academic and governmental publications regarding Vietnam and the Vietnam War. Finally, there are several folders of material relating to the World Airways airline, including original publications discussing its involvement with Operation Babylift, as well as other materials, newsletters, and correspondence from the World Airways reunion tour hosted by the airline in 2005 for Operation Babylift adoptees and participants.

Arranged alphabetically by subject.

### **Box 1 - Subject File**

#### **Status**

#### **Title**

OPEN	Amerasian Bill
OPEN	Babylift Photographs - Photocopies
OPEN	Babylift Volunteer List 1975 (1)-(2)
OPEN	Calendar 1975
OPEN	"Children of Vietnam": Betty Jean Lifton and Thomas C. Fox
OPEN	Children's Hospital - Commemorative Plaque 2002
OPEN	Children's Hospital - Documents, 1975
OPEN	Children's Hospital - Documents (Photocopies), 1975
OPEN	Continental Care Center, 1975
OPEN	"Flying Playpens" - Photocopies
OPEN	Friends of Children of Vietnam - Adoption Process, 1974-1976
OPEN	Friends of Children of Vietnam - Booklets, 1975-1976
OPEN	Friends of Children of Vietnam - Incorporation, 1967
OPEN	Friends of Children of Vietnam - Lehigh Valley Chapter
OPEN	Friends of Children of Vietnam - Miscellaneous Records, 1974

## **Box 2 - Subject File**

<b>Status</b>	<b>Title</b>
OPEN	Friends of Children of Vietnam - Orphanage Reports (1)-(2)
OPEN	Friends of Children of Vietnam - Providence Orphanage, Sadec, Vietnam
OPEN	Friends of Children of Vietnam - Theodore Gleichman
OPEN	Friends of Children of Vietnam - Volunteer Information, 1975
OPEN	Holt Adoption Program
OPEN	"MAC and Operation Babylift", 1989
OPEN	"Man with a Destiny, World with a Friend: Theodore Gleichman", 1988
OPEN	McGorry, James P. (Babylift Adoptee)
OPEN	Miscellaneous Newsletters, 1973-1976

<b>Status</b>	<b>Title</b>
OPEN	"Operation Babylift and the Adoption of Vietnamese Orphans" - Master's Thesis by Andrea Warren
OPEN	Red Rock Elementary School, 1975
OPEN	"Standard Instructions and Advice to Civilians for Normal and Emergency Situations - SAFE"
OPEN	Southeast Asia Maps, 1967
OPEN	"The Republic of Vietnam" - Health Data Publication
OPEN	"The War Cradle" - Drafts and Notes

### **Box 3 - Subject File**

<b>Status</b>	<b>Title</b>
OPEN	"The War Cradle" - Draft,Undated
OPEN	"The War Cradle" - Images and Drafts
OPEN	"The War Cradle" - Interview with Ross Meador
OPEN	"The War Cradle" - Interviews,Undated
OPEN	"The War Cradle" - Notes,Undated
OPEN	"The War Cradle" - Profiles,Undated
OPEN	"The War Cradle" Research - Articles About Vietnam
OPEN	"The War Cradle" Research - Children's Hospital Brochures and Notes
OPEN	Websites, 2004-2005
OPEN	World Airways Publications
OPEN	World Airways Reunion - Correspondence (1)-(2)
OPEN	World Airways Reunion - Friends of Children of Various Nations

### **Box 4 - Subject File**

<b>Status</b>	<b>Title</b>
OPEN	World Airways Reunion Memorabilia (1)-(2)

### **Correspondence File, 1995-2005.**

(Boxes 4-5, 0.4 linear feet)

Correspondence to and from Shirley Peck Barnes, including email correspondence and attachments. Subjects include Operation Babylift as well as the general

repercussions of the Vietnam War, including some of Barnes' work to recover POWs during the 1980s. None of these materials date from the time of Operation Babylift. For the most part, these materials appear to be routine correspondence between Barnes and other parties who participated or were interested in Operation Babylift. There is also some material relating to the World Airways reunion tour in 2005.

Arranged alphabetically by subject or last name.

#### **Box 4 (Continued) - Correspondence**

<b>Status</b>	<b>Title</b>
OPEN	Aimee Phan Book Review
OPEN	Brewer, Susan - America's Heroes of Freedom
OPEN	Delahunt, Kara
OPEN	Donner, Fred
OPEN	Healy, Ken
OPEN	Hrezo, Joseph
OPEN	Keating, William
OPEN	Meador, Ross
OPEN	Miscellaneous (email)
OPEN	Noone, Lana
OPEN	Oakland Museum Vietnam Exhibit
OPEN	Prisoners Of War (POW)

#### **Box 5 - Correspondence**

<b>Status</b>	<b>Title</b>
OPEN	Sachs, Dana
OPEN	Tancredo, Tom
OPEN	Vietnam Adoptee Network
OPEN	World Airways
OPEN	World Airways Employees

#### **Magazine and Newspaper Clippings, 1940-2005.**

(Boxes 5-6, 0.7 linear feet)

Newspaper clippings, entire newspapers, and entire magazines. The articles discuss the Vietnam War, the fall of Saigon, and Operation Babylift, with the



majority of materials dating from 1975. There is also a large number of clippings from the 1980s and 1990s, often discussing the life of the adopted children in America, and including the coverage of several lawsuits by Vietnamese parents to recover their children from American adoptive parents. There is also coverage of the World Airways reunion tour from 2005.

Arranged chronologically by month and year, with separate folders for complete issues of newspapers and magazines.

### **Box 5 (Continued) - Magazine and Newspaper Clippings**

<b>Status</b>	<b>Title</b>
OPEN	Clippings: 1940 - Feb. 1975
OPEN	Clippings: March 1975
OPEN	Clippings: April 1975 (1)-(5)
OPEN	Clippings: April 1975 (Oakland Tribune - April 3, 1975)
OPEN	Clippings: April 1975 (Stars and Stripes - April 1975)
OPEN	Clippings: April 1975 (Newsweek - April 14, 1975)
OPEN	Clippings: May 1975
OPEN	Clippings: May 1975 (Newsweek - May 5, 1975)
OPEN	Clippings: May 1975 (Newsweek - May 12, 1975)
OPEN	Clippings: May 1975 (Time Magazine - May 12, 1975)

### **Box 6 - Magazine and Newspaper Clippings**

<b>Status</b>	<b>Title</b>
OPEN	Clippings: June 1975 (People Magazine - June 16, 1975)
OPEN	Clippings: June - August, 1975
OPEN	Clippings: September - December, 1975
OPEN	Clippings: January - May, 1976
OPEN	Clippings: May - December, 1976
OPEN	Clippings: 1977-1979
OPEN	Clippings: 1980-1984
OPEN	Clippings: 1984-1989
OPEN	Clippings: April 1984 (ABC News: 20/20 - April 5, 1984)
OPEN	Clippings: April 1985 (Time Magazine - April 15, 1985)

<b>Status</b>	<b>Title</b>
OPEN	Clippings: April 1985 (Washington Post Magazine - April 21, 1985)
OPEN	Clippings: 1990-1999
OPEN	Clippings: April 1995 (Time Magazine - April 24, 1995)
OPEN	Clippings: 2000 (People Magazine - May 1, 2000)
OPEN	Clippings: 2000 (Readers Digest, May 2000)
OPEN	Clippings: 2000 (Saigon-Tex News, June 2000)
OPEN	Clippings: 2000-2005
OPEN	Clippings: 2005 (Airlift/Tanker Quarterly, Spring 2005)
OPEN	Clippings: 2005 (Military Officer, Dec. 2005)
OPEN	Clippings:Undated

### **LeeSanne Buchanan Materials, 1967-2002.**

(Boxes 7-8, 0.5 linear feet)

Correspondence, diary notes, newspaper clippings, memoranda, newsletters, financial records, pamphlets, and articles. It is unclear how Barnes acquired these materials, but they provide an interesting insight into the life of the Buchanan family, who adopted a son from Vietnam in 1968 (not as a part of Operation Babylift). LeeSanne Buchanan was the president of the Friends of Children of Vietnam (FCVN) until 1973 or 1974. This series thoroughly documents the process of international adoption, including correspondence between her, Rosemary Taylor (a missionary in Vietnam who eventually worked for the FCVN), United States government officials, and adoption lawyers. Taylor's letters in particular are helpful for revealing the conditions of orphanages in Vietnam from 1968 through the end of the war. Although much of the material pre-dates Operation Babylift, the series also contains correspondence between Buchanan and other Babylift participants, as well as newspaper clippings and FCVN materials from 1974 and 1975.

Arranged alphabetically by subject (original folder titles and arrangement retained).

### **Box 7 - LeeSanne Buchanan Materials**

<b>Status</b>	<b>Title</b>
OPEN	Adoption Book (1)-(3)
OPEN	American Friends Service Committee (1)-(2)

<b>Status</b>	<b>Title</b>
OPEN	Correspondence: Adams, Pat
OPEN	Correspondence: Barnes, Shirley Peck
OPEN	Correspondence: Miscellaneous
OPEN	Correspondence: Taylor, Rosemary
OPEN	Financial Records, 1968 - 1973
OPEN	Foster Orphanage Plan, 1974
OPEN	Friends of Children of Vietnam (1)-(2)
OPEN	Friends of Children of Vietnam - Newsletters and Policy Statements

### **Box 8 - LeeSanne Buchanan Materials**

<b>Status</b>	<b>Title</b>
OPEN	Miscellaneous Materials
OPEN	Newspaper and Magazine Clippings
OPEN	Rosemary Taylor Articles, 1967 - 1975

### **Books, 1945-2004.**

(Boxes 8-12, 2.35 linear feet)

Books from Shirley Peck Barnes' personal collection, relating to international adoption, Vietnam, or Operation Babylift. The majority of the materials are in English, but there are two books at the end of the series that are in Vietnamese, with unknown titles and authors. Some of the books include handwritten notes to Barnes or her own annotations to the text.

Arranged alphabetically by author's last name.

### **Box 8 (Continued) - Books**

<b>Status</b>	<b>Title</b>
OPEN	Allen, George N.: "Ri"
OPEN	Baker, Mark: "Nam: The Vietnam War in the Words of the Men and Women Who Fought There"
OPEN	Chinnock, Frank W.: "Kim: A Gift From Vietnam"
OPEN	Clark, Cherie: "After Sorrow Comes Joy"

### **Box 9 - Books**

<b>Status</b>	<b>Title</b>
OPEN	Edwards, Charlene: "Voices From Vietnam"
OPEN	Eymann, Marcia, and Charles Wollenberg: "What's Going On? California and the Vietnam Era"
OPEN	Goldman, Nancy Loring: "Female Soldiers - Combatants or Noncombatants?"
OPEN	Guarino, Larry: "A P.O.W.'s Story: 2801 Days in Hanoi"
OPEN	Hendricks, Rickey, and Mark S. Foster: "For a Child's Sake: History of the Children's Hospital, Denver, Colorado, 1910-1990"

#### **Box 10 - Books**

<b>Status</b>	<b>Title</b>
OPEN	Hogue, Richard: "We Were the Third Herd: an infantryman's story of survival in America's most controversial war - Vietnam"
OPEN	Karlson, Eric: "Fall To Grace: A True Story of Sex, Drugs, Vietnam and Enlightenment"
OPEN	Lanning, Michael Lee: "Vietnam at the Movies"
OPEN	McDonald, Ben: "The Vietnam Book List"
OPEN	Michener, James A.: "Tales of the South Pacific"

#### **Box 11 - Books**

<b>Status</b>	<b>Title</b>
OPEN	Nguyen, Kien: "The Unwanted: A Memoir of Childhood"
OPEN	Phan, Aimee: "We Should Never Meet"
OPEN	Phong, Nguyen Xuan: "Hope and Vanquished Reality"
OPEN	Saywell, Shelley: "Women in War: First-hand accounts from World War II to El Salvador"

#### **Box 12 - Books**

<b>Status</b>	<b>Title</b>
OPEN	Snepp, Frank: "Decent Interval: An Insider's Account of Saigon's Indecent End Told by the CIA's Chief Strategy Analyst in Vietnam"

Status	Title
OPEN	Stevenson, Eleanor "Bumpy" and Pete Martin: "I Knew Your Soldier: An Intimate Picture of our Boys Overseas, by the Red Cross Girls Who Know the GI Best"
OPEN	Thiemann, LeAnn, and Carol Dey: "This Must Be My Brother: The Daring Rescue of Innocent Children in the Final Desperate Hours of the Vietnam War"
OPEN	USAF Southeast Asia Monograph Series: "Last Flight From Saigon"
OPEN	Books written in Vietnamese (1)-(2)