



Smithsonian

National Museum of American History Kenneth E. Behring Center

Barbara Beirne Portrait Photoprints

NMAH.AC.0356

By David E. Haberstich, Revised by Tess K. Harmon, Intern

1991, Revised 2024

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Collection Overview

Repository:	Archives Center, National Museum of American History
Title:	Barbara Beirne Portrait Photoprints
Date:	circa 1985-1986.
Identifier:	NMAH.AC.0356
Creator:	Beirne, Barbara T., 1933-2021 (Donor)
Extent:	0.1 Cubic feet (1 box)
Language:	English .
Summary:	Twenty portraits, taken in the 1980s, of twenty-one men and women who were active in the civil rights and peace movements of the 1960s.

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information

Collection donated by Barbara T. Beirne, September 6, 1991.

Ownership and Custodial History

Portraits were made for the book described above, but this set of prints apparently was created specifically for the Smithsonian in 1990.

Location of Originals

Original negatives in photographer's collection.

Available Formats

Copies of some photographs also exist in the Joan and Robert K. Morrison Collection, NMAH.AC.0359.

Processing Information

Processed by David E. Haberstich, curator, 1991. Photographs digitized by Tess Harmon, intern, 2024.

Preferred Citation

Barbara Beirne Portrait Photoprints, Archives Center, National Museum of American History.

Restrictions

Collection is open for research.

Conditions Governing Use

Barbara Beirne retains copyright. A nonexclusive license was conveyed to the Archives Center through a Deed of Gift signed by the donor. Archives Center cost-recovery and use fees may apply when requesting reproductions.

Biographical

Barbara T. Beirne (1933-2021) was a free-lance documentary and portrait photographer from Mendham, New Jersey. She worked primarily for non-profit organizations and newspapers, focusing on social justice issues, especially those faced by women and children. Ms. Beirne additionally authored and photographed for five children's books, taught and lectured in schools and libraries in New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania, and was an adjunct professor of photography at County College of Morris, Randolph, New Jersey. She held a Master of Fine Arts in Photography from Pratt Institute, Brooklyn, New York, and a Bachelor of Political Science from Marymount College, Tarrytown, New York.

During her 35-year career as a photographer, Beirne turned her lens toward the struggles, aspirations, and accomplishments of marginalized people, which resulted in a wide array of projects, including "Serving Home and Community: Women of Southern Appalachia," "Becoming American: Teenagers and Immigration," "Fire Over Belfast," and a collection of portrait photographs of civil rights activists for a book by Joan and Robert K. Morrison, *From Camelot to Kent State*.

Her work was exhibited widely in solo and group exhibitions, and the Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service (SITES) sponsored two nation-wide tours of "Women of Southern Appalachia" and "Becoming American." These shows respectively featured the resilience of women in the poverty-stricken region of Appalachia during the 1990s, and teenage immigrants adapting to life in the United States during the early 2000s. Beirne traveled extensively for her projects, documenting Belfast, Northern Ireland during "The Troubles," Kosovar refugees in New Jersey, and children's lives in India, Nepal, Mexico, and Ecuador. She developed connections with the communities and subjects she photographed, often employing use of the photo interview.

"Serving Home and Community: Women of Southern Appalachia," "Becoming American: Teenagers and Immigration," and Beirne's portraits of civil rights activists are housed at the Archives Center at the National Museum of American History, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC.

Historical

In 1985, Joan Morrison and her son Robert K. Morrison conducted approximately one hundred oral history interviews with a diverse group of Americans about their experiences in the civil rights and peace movements of the 1960s. They also collected photographs of the interviewees—pictures taken during the 1960s and photographs taken at the time of the interview. Portions of some of these interviews and the photographs are published in their 1987 book, *From Camelot to Kent State*. Some of the new photographs, taken by Barbara T. Beirne, were exhibited at the Bridge Gallery, The New School, New York City, from October 2 to October 31, 1989. The Morrison collection of audiotapes, transcripts, and other materials from this project was donated to the Archives Center as Collection number 359. Later in 1991, Barbara Beirne donated twenty exhibition quality, matted photographs from the Morrison project. These prints apparently were made in 1989 and were included in the New School exhibition.

Bibliography

Author and photographer, *A Pianist's Debut*. Carlrhoda Books, 1990. Author and photographer, *Under the Lights*. Carlrhoda Books, 1988.

Photographer, *What Do You Mean I Have a Learning Disability?* Walker Publishers, 1991.

Photographer, *Water is Wet*. G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1985.

Photographs in: Joan and Robert K. Morrison. *From Camelot to Kent State: The Sixties Experience in the Worlds of Those Who Lived It*. New York: Times Books, 1987.

Scope and Contents

The collection consists of twenty silver gelatin prints, as described on the container list attached. These are exhibition-quality prints, matted, signed by the artist, with subject identification. The prints are arranged in no particular order, but are numbered according to the list. Note that each print therefore has an individual museum catalog number, e.g., 1991.0886.01- unlike the majority of Archives Center collections--and these numbers should be referenced in exhibition and loan transactions.

Arrangement

Collection is arranged into one series.

Names and Subject Terms

This collection is indexed in the online catalog of the Smithsonian Institution under the following terms:

Subjects:

- Civil rights
- Peace movements -- 1960-1970
- Photography -- United States -- Portraits -- Photographs
- Vietnam War, 1961-1975 -- Protest Movements

Types of Materials:

- Photographs -- Black-and-white photoprints -- Silver gelatin -- 1980-2000

Names:

- Anderson, Kay
- Baker, Dave
- Berrigan, Philip
- Bolden, Jackie
- Cleaver, Eldridge, 1935-1998
- Coffin, William Sloane
- De Gennaro, Jane
- Garrell, Nancy
- Hawk, David
- Hoffman, Bruce
- Keegan, Leone
- Knight, Dee
- Lewis, John
- Libby, John
- McAllister, Elizabeth
- McNamara, Craig
- Montfort, Bill
- Montfort, Susan
- Moore, Irma
- Rubin, Jerry
- Simon, Doug

Container Listing

Series 1: Photoprints, 1980s

Box 1, Item 1	David Baker, circa 1980s 1 Print (30.3 cm. x 20.7 cm.)
Box 1, Item 2	Jackie Bolden , circa 1980s 1 Print (22.2 cm. x 29.9 cm.)
Box 1, Item 3	Doug Simon, circa 1980s 1 Print (19.8 cm. x 29.9 cm.)
Box 1, Item 4	Jerry Rubin, circa 1980s 1 Print (20.9 cm. x 30.6 cm.)
Box 1, Item 5	Eldridge Cleaver, circa 1980s 1 Print (19.3 cm. x 27.7 cm.)
Box 1, Item 6	Philip Berrigan, circa 1980s 1 Print (22.1 cm. x 33.7 cm.)
Box 1, Item 7	Irma Moore (in cemetery), circa 1980s 1 Print (21.9 cm. x 31.6 cm.)
Box 1, Item 8	Jane de Gennaro (with child), circa 1980s 1 Print (20.2 cm. x 29.2 cm.)
Box 1, Item 9	John Lewis, circa 1980s 1 Print (20.6 cm. x 29.9 cm.)
Box 1, Item 10	Kay Anderson, circa 1980s 1 Print (20.6 cm. x 30.5 cm.)
Box 1, Item 11	David Hawk, circa 1980s 1 Print (23.4 cm. x 28.1 cm.)
Box 1, Item 12	Joan Libby, circa 1980s 1 Print (23.2 cm. x 29.2 cm)
Box 1, Item 13	Susan and Bill Monfort, circa 1980s 1 Print (20.2 cm. x 30.3 cm.)
Box 1, Item 14	Leone Keegan, circa 1980s 1 Print (29.0 cm. x 21.1 cm.)

Box 1, Item 15 [Elizabeth McAllister, circa 1980s](#)
1 Print (29.6 cm. x 21.5 cm.)

Box 1, Item 16 [William Sloane Coffin, circa 1980s](#)
1 Print (21.2 cm. x 28.3 cm.)

Box 1, Item 17 [Bruce Hoffman, circa 1980s](#)
1 Prints (halftone) (29.6 cm. x 21.6 cm.)

Box 1, Item 18 [Nancy Gorrell \(in classroom, with blackboard\), circa 1980s](#)
1 Print (23.2 cm. x 29.2 cm.)

Box 1, Item 19 [Dee Knight, circa 1980s](#)
1 Prints and postcard (22.5 cm. x 27.0 cm.)

Box 1, Item 20 [Craig McNamara, circa 1980s](#)
1 Print (22.1 cm. x 29.0 cm.)

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