

Ralph W. Barnes papers, 1917-1983

Overview of the Collection

Creator	Barnes, Ralph W.
Title	Ralph W. Barnes papers
Dates	1917-1983 (inclusive) 1917 1983 (bulk) 1926 1940
Quantity	13 linear feet, (3 boxes, 22 oversize boxes)
Collection Number	WUA016
Summary	This collection contains materials that relate to Ralph W. Barnes' fourteen year career as a foreign correspondent for the New York Herald Tribune. Barnes reported in Europe from 1926 to 1940, and was stationed in Benito Mussolini's Italy, Joseph Stalin's Russia, and Adolf Hitler's Germany. The collection includes items related to Barnes' career as well as his personal life. Correspondence, journals, and scrapbooks created by his wife, Esther Barnes are also included. The majority of Barnes' published stories are documented in scrapbooks created by his father, E.T. Barnes. A notable item in this collection is a letter from Joseph Stalin to Barnes, written in 1933.
Repository	Willamette University Archives and Special Collections Archives and Special Collections Mark O. Hatfield Library 900 State Street Salem, OR 97301 Telephone: 503-370-6866 Fax: 503-370-6141 archives@willamette.edu
Access Restrictions	This collection is open to researchers.
Languages	English

Historical Note

Ralph Waldo Barnes was born on June 14, 1899 in Salem, Oregon to Edward Talbot Barnes and Mabel Nancy Baker Barnes. Barnes attended local public schools and graduated from Salem High School in 1917. The summer after graduation, Barnes took military training at St. John's Military Academy in Delafield, Wisconsin. He returned to Salem in the fall of 1918 to begin studies at Willamette University, but his studies were interrupted when his military reserve unit was called for training at Fort McArthur in Waco, Texas. He returned to Willamette and graduated in 1922 with a degree in history. After receiving a Master's degree in Economics from Harvard University, Barnes returned to Salem to marry his longtime sweetheart, Esther Parounagian, who had graduated from Willamette in 1923.

In 1924 Barnes and Esther moved to New York City where he found a job working for the Brooklyn Daily Eagle. A brief stretch with the Evening World allowed Barnes to leverage himself into a position with the New York Herald Tribune, which he held from 1924 until his death in 1940.

His first assignment as a foreign correspondent took him to Paris, France in 1926. In 1930 Barnes was given a promotion and transferred to Rome, Italy where he reported under the rule of Benito Mussolini. In May of 1930, Esther gave birth to a daughter named Joan in Italy. Almost a year later, Barnes was transferred to Russia during the height of Joseph Stalin's government. He was assigned to the Moscow bureau where he reported from 1931 to 1935. Barnes was an avid reader and heavily supplemented his news reporting with background research. During his first month in Moscow, he wrote to his father "My Britannica is not here yet; hope to have it within a couple of weeks; for, without it, I feel like a nearsighted man who has lost his spectacles." In the fall of 1931, a second daughter, Suzanne, was born while Esther and Joan were in Paris.

Barnes was conscious of his unique position in Russia: "Here I'm one of a few observers of what is undoubtedly the most important experiment of this century; and perhaps for several centuries; either for good or bad." He carried this perspective to each of his subsequent posts throughout Europe.

Barnes left Moscow to take over the Berlin, Germany bureau in 1935 and spent four years under the rule of Adolph Hitler. In March of 1939, just before the start of the Second World War, he was offered a position as head of the London bureau in England. In 1940 Barnes returned to Berlin to report on the war. On June 21, 1940 he was expelled from Berlin for a story that government censors found abrasive. Due to escalating tensions in Europe, a few weeks earlier on June 2, Esther, Joan, and Suzanne returned to New York from Dublin, Ireland via the ship the U.S.S. Roosevelt.

Barnes continued traveling as a journalist, despite the expulsion, going from Berlin to Budapest, Hungary and then on to Bucharest, Romania and eventually Egypt. In Egypt, Barnes became an official war correspondent and was stationed with the British Army. When Italy invaded Greece, Barnes and the other correspondents accompanied the British forces to Greece on a warship. On November 17, 1940 Barnes was given permission to accompany the Royal Air Force (RAF) on a night raid. Weather conditions drove the plane off course, causing it to crash into a mountain range in Yugoslavia, killing all on board. Barnes was the first war correspondent to be killed in World War II. He was buried with military honors in Yugoslavia. Leland Stowe, a longtime friend and colleague of Barnes, wrote an obituary in which he quoted a war correspondent also assigned to the RAF, "Ralph always wanted to know everything about everything. He had to see for himself. He always asked more questions than the rest of us put together. Out in the desert he got interested in the stars, so he bought several books on astronomy as soon as he got back to Cairo. Of course, he was a veteran and we were lots of us younger than he, but he could never get over his enthusiasm." Three years after his death, a Liberty ship was christened the S.S. Ralph Barnes in his honor.

Esther raised her two daughters in Salem and married Chester Downs in 1946. Esther died in 1985 and is buried in Salem, Oregon.

Content Description

The Ralph W. Barnes collection is arranged into four series: Series I. Ralph Barnes, 1918-1943; Series II. Esther Barnes, 1924-1940; Series III. E. T. Barnes, 1927-1940; and Series IV. Photographs, 1917-1943.

The collection contains letters, newspaper clippings, photographs, bound scrapbooks, passports, journals. There are also typed transcripts of Ralph and Esther Barnes' letters.

Use of the Collection

Restrictions on Use

Library acts as "fair use" reproduction agent.

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Preferred Citation

[Identification of item], Ralph W. Barnes papers, Archives and Special Collections, Mark O. Hatfield Library, Willamette University.

Administrative Information

Arrangement

These records are arranged into four series based upon creator. Each series is ordered by the type of material and is in chronological order.

Location of Collection

Mark O. Hatfield Library

Custodial History

Gift of Suzanne Barnes Morrison and Joan Barnes Kelly, January 17, 2008.

Related Materials

Robert C. Notson papers

Bibliography

Mahoney, Barbara S. 2002. Dispatches and dictators: Ralph Barnes for the Herald Tribune. 1st ed. Corvallis: Oregon State University Press.

Detailed Description of the Collection

Series I: Ralph W. Barnes, 1918-1943

This series covers Barnes education and subsequent fourteen year career as a foreign correspondent for the New York Herald Tribune in Europe. The bulk of the series is outgoing correspondence from Barnes to family members. Included are essays from graduate school, journals, a letter from Joseph Stalin to Barnes, and articles about the ship christened in his honor, S.S. Ralph Barnes.

This series is organized into two subseries: Professional Files and Personal Files. These are arranged in chronological order.

Container(s)	Description	Dates	
Subseries A: Professional Files		1924-1943	
Box	Folder		
1	1	Harvard Essay	1924
1	2	Journal from Eagle	1925
1	3	Journal from England and Russia	1927
1	4	Stalin letter	1933
1	5	Liberty Ship	1943
Subseries B: Personal Files		1918-1940	
Box	Folder		
1	6	Early letters to Esther	1918
1	7	Letter to classmates	1927
1	8	Letters	1929-1932
1	9	Letters	1932-1933
1	10	Letters	1937
1	11	Letters	1939
1	12	Letters	1940
1	13	Telegrams	1932-1940

Container(s)		Description	Dates
1	14	Legal Documents	1926-1940

Series II: Esther Barnes, 1924-1940

This series includes letters to family, journals, scrapbooks, and passports.

This series is divided into six subseries, each of which is arranged chronologically.

We are still looking for the unpublished 1983 interview she gave to the Statesman Journal regarding Ralph Barnes.

Container(s)		Description	Dates
		Subseries A: Correspondence	1930-1940

Box	Folder		
2	1	Letters	1930-1932
2	2	Letters	1933
2	3	Letters	1934
2	4	Letters	1935
2	5	Letters	1936
2	6	Letters	1937
2	7	Letters	1938
2	8	Letters	1939
2	9	Letters	1940

		Subseries B: Journals and other writings	1925-1927
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Box	Folder		
2	10	Journal, pp 1-10	1925
2	11	Journal, pp 11-20	1925
2	12	Journal, pp 21-30	1925

Container(s)		Description	Dates
2	13	Journal, pp 31-38	1925
2	14	Journal, pp 1-10	1926
2	15	Journal, pp 11-20	1926
2	16	Journal, pp 21-30	1926
2	17	Journal, pp 31-40	1926
2	18	Journal, pp 41-47	1926
2	19	Journal, pp 1-10	1927
2	20	Journal, pp 11-20	1927
2	21	Journal, pp 21-30	1927
2	22	Journal, pp 31-40	1927
2	23	Journal, pp 41-48	1927
2	24	Bound Journal	1927
2	25	Handwritten page, brief history of Russia	undated
Subseries C: Scrapbooks and Memorabilia			1927-1931
Box	Folder		
2	26	Heidelberg	1927
2	27	Le Voyage d' Esther et Ralph	1927
2	28	Passport issued in Rome	1931

Series III: E. T. Barnes, 1927-1940

This series is comprised of materials assembled by E. T. Barnes to record Ralph Barnes' career. It includes scrapbooks of published stories from 1930 to 1940 as well as typed transcripts of letters sent home from Ralph and Esther Barnes.

Container(s)	Description	Dates
	Subseries A: Scrapbooks	1927-1940
	Italy	1930-1931
Box		
4		1930 January - 1931 February
5		1930 February - 1931 February
	Russia	1931-1935
Box		
6		1931 April - 1934 June
7		1931 May - 1934 May
8		1931 April - December
9		1932 January - September
10		1933 May - 1934 January
11		1934 January - July
12		1934 December - 1935 August
13		1934 December - 1935 July
14		1935 July - August

Container(s)	Description	Dates	
Germany		1935-1939	
Box			
15		1935 August - 1936 September	
16		1936 September - 1937 December	
17		1937 December - 1939 March	
England		1939-1940	
Box			
18		1939 April - August	
19		1939 August - December	
20		1940 January - June	
21		1940 June - October	
Mid-East		1940	
Box			
22		1940 October - November	
Box	Folder		
1	37	Articles on death of Ralph Barnes	1940
1	38	Ralph Barnes best stories	1927-1940

Container(s)		Description	Dates
		Subseries B: Typed transcripts of letters from Ralph W. Barnes	1931-1940
Box	Folder		
3	1	Experiences of a foreign correspondent in Europe	undated
3	2	Russia	1931 April 13 - 1931 November 21
3	3	Russia	1931 November 25 - 1932 November 7
3	4	Russia	1932 November 18 - 1933 August
3	5	Russia	1933 August 7 - 1935 January 9
3	6	Russia	1935 January 16 - 1936 June 5
3	7	Germany	1936 June 8 - 1937 April 16
3	8	Germany	1937 May 18 - 1938 July 10
3	9	England	1938 July 24 - 1939 August 4
3	10	England	1939 August 12 - 1940 September
3	11		1940 August 19 - 1940 October 6
		Subseries C: Typed transcripts of letters from Esther Barnes	1933-1940
Box	Folder		

Container(s)		Description	Dates
3	12	Russia	1933 June - 1934 May
3	13	Russia, Germany	1934 May 2 - 1936 January 21
3	14	Germany	1936 January 29 - 1936 December 31
3	15	Germany	1936 November 27 - 1937 October
3	16	Germany	1937 October 27 - 1938 October
3	17	England	1938 November 9 - 1940 January
3	18	England	1940 January 27 - 1940 July 8

Series IV: Photographs, 1917-1943

Included in this series are a variety of photographs of Ralph and Esther Barnes. Some of the photographs are have dates and locations while others do not have any information.

This series is arranged in chronological order.

Container(s)		Description	Dates
Box	Folder		
1	15	Salem High School yearbook, Ralph Barnes and Esther Parounagian	1917
1	16	Ralph Barnes in military uniform	1918
1	17	Ralph Barnes honorable discharge from the United States Army	1918
1	18	Group, includes Ralph and Esther Barnes	1925

Container(s)	Description	Dates
1 19	Group, includes Ralph and Esther Barnes	1927
1 20	Ralph and Esther Barnes	1929
1 21	Ralph Barnes	1929
1 22	Ralph Barnes, Istanbul	1940
1 23	Esther, Suzanne, and Joan Barnes arriving from Europe aboard the S.S. Roosevelt	1940
1 24	Ralph Barnes, Athens	1940
1 25	Esther Barnes	undated
1 26	Ralph Barnes	undated
1 27	Ralph and Esther Barnes	undated
1 28	Ralph Barnes	undated
1 29	Kiwanis luncheon	undated
1 30	Ralph Barnes	undated
1 31	"Ralph W. Barnes" Liberty ship	undated
1 32	The Shirers and the Barnes	undated
1 33	Ralph W. Barnes	undated
1 34	Karl Radek and Esther, Moscow	1935
1 35	Esther at Pacific City	undated
1 36	Barnes writing a story in Red Square	undated

Names and Subjects

Subject Terms :

Capitol Mall expansion (Salem, Or.)

Journalism

Ralph W. Barnes papers, 1917-1983

<http://archiveswest.orbiscascade.org/ark:/80444/xv94616>

Kristallnacht, 1938
World War, 1914-1918--United States
World War, 1939-1945--Aerial operations, British
World War, 1939-1945--Campaigns--Europe
World War, 1939-1945--United States

Personal Names :

Barnes, Esther, 1901-1985
Duranty, Walter, 1884-1957
Franco, Francisco, 1892-1975
Hitler, Adolf, 1889-1945
Lenin, Vladimir Il'ich, 1870-1924
Lindbergh, Charles A. (Charles Augustus), 1902-1974
Mussolini, Benito, 1883-1945
Notson, Robert Carver, 1902-1999
Roosevelt, Franklin D. (Franklin Delano), 1882-1945
Stalin, Joseph, 1878-1953

Corporate Names :

Brooklyn Daily Eagle (Firm)
New York Herald Tribune (Firm)
New York Times Company
Willamette University

Geographical Names :

Oregon
Red Square (Moscow, Russia)
Soviet Union--Economic policy--1928-1932
Soviet Union--Economic policy--1933-1937

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