David P. Barton ’66
Dartmouth College Oral History Program
Dartmouth Vietnam Project
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Transcribed by Mim Eisenberg/WordCraft

[RILEY E.]

CARBONE: Hello. This is Riley Carbone, and I am at Rauner [Special Collections] Library at Dartmouth College in Hanover, New Hampshire, speaking by phone with David [P.] Barton, who is in Virginia. This is the 30th of September 2016, at just a little bit after 10 a.m., and this is an interview for the Dartmouth Vietnam Project.

Thank you so much for being with us.

BARTON: I’m very glad.

CARBONE: So can you just start by talking a little bit about your childhood? Maybe where you were born, when you were born?

BARTON: Yes. I was born in Washington, D.C., on July 11th, 1944. Grew up most of my childhood in Silver Spring, Maryland. But for two years of my childhood, very important years, when I was young, five and six years old, my family went to England and lived for two years in England. My father was working for the Marshall Plan, and that was an important international experience for me, even at a very young age, because I loved to travel and loved the foreign experience. So as we talk more about Vietnam and its importance, I think that early childhood experience of being exposed to a foreign, be it an English-speaking foreign experience, was—was important.

And I went through high school in Silver Spring, Maryland, and when I graduated, I attended Dartmouth College. My brother was—when I entered Dartmouth as a freshman, my brother was there as a senior. And part of the reason I went to Dartmouth College was that my brother told me *not* to go to Dartmouth.

CARBONE: [Chuckles.]

BARTON: And I usually did most of the things that my brother told me not to do. [Both chuckle.] So that's how I ended up at Dartmouth.

CARBONE: Wonderful. You mentioned that your father was working in Europe with the Marshall Plan. Could you talk more about what he did for work and his involvement in that?

BARTON: Yes. He was—he was in government service. He was an economist for the U.S. government, and he went over with the Marshall Plan simply to help Great Britain recover from the war [World War II]. And we lived there for two years, and he was helping Great Britain with its trade agreements and getting emergency—basically emergency food supplies and other trade items to—to the British after the war.

CARBONE: You mentioned that you were just five and six years old when your family was in Great Britain, but were you aware of, like, what your dad was doing and why your family was over there?

BARTON: Yes. I was—I was fairly aware. Obviously, I was having fun, riding a little bicycle and playing all sorts of games with all the neighborhood kids, but I was aware that Britain had gone through a war. I was aware—we had rationing—rationing books and rationing coupons and things like that, so I was aware that there was a shortage of certain items for the British. And, you know, it was a vague awareness, but some awareness of why we were there.

We did a lot of traveling in Europe, which was also—I have very vivid memories of, even though it was at a very young age.

CARBONE: [Chuckles.] Where did you travel to?

BARTON: Oh, we traveled to France and Germany and Switzerland and Austria, mostly—mostly those countries.

CARBONE: Okay. Wonderful.

And so going back to—you grew up in Silver Springs [sic], Maryland. Tell me a little bit about Silver Springs [sic], your childhood, schooling, just the details.

BARTON: Okay. Well, I went to public school in Silver Spring. I grew up in a very small neighborhood, lived in a small house. It was post-World War II housing, a small suburban brick house. We lived on the edge of two public tennis courts and a huge playing field, and that's where I spent most of my time as a child, was playing sports out back of my house, playing tennis. I played tennis at Dartmouth [chuckles] as a result. I grew up playing tennis. My dad coached all the neighborhood kids on Saturday mornings, so our house and our tennis courts—the tennis courts, which were public courts, were—were open for the neighborhood, and spent most of my time playing tennis or playing football on the field out in back of our house.

Attended elementary school, middle school and high school in Silver Spring and really had a—had a wonderful experience. In high school, I got involved in government issues. I was class president for a couple of years and, you know, felt the responsibility of—of I suppose even a school elected office, so that was important in terms of my career later on, just knowing the importance of elected—elected office.

And as I said, my brother told me not to attend Dartmouth, so I did, and our father had gone to Harvard [University], and he said, "I don't care where you boys go, but you're not going to Harvard," because he did not have a good experience at Harvard. [Both chuckle.] He had to work his way through. He wasn't from a wealthy background. And finished in three years at Harvard, but it was—it was tough for him, and he didn't like some of the elitism which existed at Harvard then. In any case, I applied to Dartmouth and a few other schools and decided to attend Dartmouth

CARBONE: You mentioned—so your older brother was a student at Dartmouth. Do you have any other siblings?

BARTON: No, just the one brother, my older brother.

CARBONE: Okay. So in, let's see, the fall of 1962 you started at Dartmouth. Can you walk me through your first term here or, you know, your first memories of Dartmouth College?

BARTON: Sure, sure. I went on the freshman trip, which was wonderful. I had a great experience on the freshman trip, made a couple of friends during the freshman trip that I kept for all four years at Dartmouth. Loved that experience of hiking in the mountains and going to the lodge by President [John S.] Dickey [Class of 1929], who came there to talk to all the freshmen around the trip.

Then I tried out for the freshman tennis team. I lived in the Topliff [Hall] dorm. I would walk right outside to the tennis courts. Tried out for the freshman team. Did very well. Made the freshman tennis team. But the person that was so important to me as a freshman was the freshman tennis coach, who was also the varsity tennis coach, [Edward G.] "Red" Hoehn [Jr.]. Lovely, lovely man.

CARBONE: How do you spell—the name?

BARTON: H-o-e-h-n, I believe.

CARBONE: Okay.

BARTON: His nickname was "Red" because he had red hair. Some hair left, but he retired after freshman year, which was a loss for me, but he was just a wonderful coach, and he would stay out there late, after the usual practice, and he and I would continue practicing, you know, until it got dark in the fall of my freshman year.

I found the studies difficult. I had to spend a lot of time studying, but did okay [chuckles] my first term. I lived in Topliff dorm, which was a huge dorm, and enjoyed that freshman experience. And took some interesting courses.

I was trying to remember whether it was freshman or sophomore year. I believe it was sophomore year when some of the first Dartmouth Vietnam teach-ins took place—and I attended those and was interested in—I was interested in government. I also took courses in French. I ended up majoring in French and minoring in government. But even freshman year, I remember getting involved in some discussions about—about Vietnam, and that was '62 and '63, which was pretty early.

CARBONE: Yeah. You were involved into government when you were high school. When you entered Dartmouth, did you kind of see a future for yourself in government? Was that where you thought your path was going?

BARTON: Not really, but I think because my father had been in government service, I sort of saw that as way in the distant future. I wasn't really thinking much about that, quite frankly. [Both chuckle.] But I was—I was interested in government just because my dad had talked a lot about—about issues: war and peace issues, about government issues, about international affairs issues. He was always talking about that around the dinner table, so I was—I was interested in that.

CARBONE: Mm-hm. Was your family a fairly politically active family?

BARTON: My father was. We went to—we went to a rally for [chuckles] Adlai [E.] Stevenson [II], I remember, my brother and I, with my dad. He was—you know, he was—he was—he loved to talk about politics. He loved to talk about government issues and international issues, so we followed him a little bit in that—on that score.

CARBONE: Mm-hm. Had your father been a Democratic voter?

BARTON: Yes, all his life, although he liked [President Dwight D.] Eisenhower.

CARBONE: Really.

BARTON: Yeah.

CARBONE: What was his reasoning behind liking Eisenhower?

BARTON: Well, Eisenhower talked a lot about the military-industrial complex. Eisenhower had experienced war but talked a lot about peace and the importance of working hard for world peace, and that part of Eisenhower's character and makeup pleased my dad. I mean, my dad was—my dad was definitely—talked about the importance of the U.N. [United Nations] in terms of avoiding a third world war,—

CARBONE: [Chuckles.]

BARTON: —having experienced two of them himself, and the importance of the U.N. and the importance of world peace, and so there was a part of Eisenhower's experience as a general that prompted him to talk about the importance of international agreements, the importance of the international community working together, the importance of working towards peace. That pleased my dad.

CARBONE: Mm-hm. So you were—you mentioned that, you know, very early on, 1962 and 1963, you were beginning to be in discussions about the Vietnam War and, you know, current U.S. policies. Can you—what were your thoughts at that time, and what were you talking about with your peers?

BARTON: Not much. We were just sort of made aware, I think through these teach-ins and some discussions—and they were—they were rare. I mean, they definitely, let's say, increased my sophomore year, but, you know, there was discussion about the United States getting involved, President [John F.] Kennedy maybe sending some advisers to Vietnam, what was going on, so just vague, general discussions.

CARBONE: Mm-hm.

BARTON: And then I can talk more generally about other things that came up during my four years at Dartmouth, that were key in terms of my activities on Vietnam, and I don't know if you want to get into that yet. [Chuckles.]

CARBONE: Yeah, maybe we could hold off for a little bit.

BARTON: Sure, sure.

CARBONE: So I looked you up in the Dartmouth yearbook, and so I have kind of an idea of things that you were involved in on campus, and you were a member of a number of clubs, you played tennis, you were in the film society. But I was—wanted to ask you more about your involvement with Dartmouth Christian Union.

BARTON: Yeah. Well, there were just a couple of friends, and we sort of latched onto the Dartmouth Christian Union because we were a part of—what attracted us to the Christian Union was its involvement in the Upper River Valley [sic; Upper Valley].

The DCU was sponsoring tutoring in the Upper River Valley, so as you know from your own experience, some of the Upper River Valley is not particularly wealthy—

CARBONE: Mm-hm.

BARTON: —and not particularly privileged in terms of schooling. probably much better now than it was in my time. But there were some—some poor families and—and students who were struggling. And so a number of us got involved in the tutoring program with the DCU, and I did some tutoring, I think even my freshman year but certainly my sophomore year. And there were a lot of, I would say [chuckles], in quotes, "liberal thinkers" at the DCU. In other words, the DCU was a place where people were doing political discussions, where there was some ferment in terms of sponsoring teach-ins or seminars, not just focused on Vietnam but focused on sort of, let's say, liberal issues: what's going on in Africa, what's happening here, what's happening in the developing world.

The head of the DCU in terms of adviser was a man named [the Rev. George H.] Kalbfleisch, and I believe he was actually Jewish, but he was working for the DCU [both chuckle] as a manager, and he was—he was a fascinating individual. He really provoked lots of discussions and lots of thinking, I would say. And so we would meet to work on the tutorial—the tutoring program, but he would bring up issues: "Well, what do you guys think of what's going on in Africa?" And we'd say, "We have no idea what's going on in Africa. [Chuckles.] Why don't—you know why don't you tell us a little bit of what's happening with the anti-Colonial movements in Africa?" Or whatever it was.

CARBONE: Mm-hm.

BARTON: But we would get into discussions, and most of us really enjoyed that. And so that was sort of a place of intellectual discussions about what was happening in the world and some focus on U.S. policies, but not much.

CARBONE: Yeah. I was struck by their description in the yearbook. They called themselves "the college's only political action group

which is involved in issues of civil rights, American foreign policy, and local poverty."

BARTON: Yeah. There you go. [Chuckles.]

CARBONE: And it very much—

BARTON: That's exactly the way it was. [Chuckles.]

CARBONE: Yeah. That idea of, like, a social justice group.

BARTON: Yeah. And—well, it wasn't—it wasn't particularly Christian. I mean [chuckles] I don't remember any—very little discussion about religion of any kind. [Both chuckle.] Or, you know, whatever you want to call it. It was a pseudo-Christian Union.

CARBONE: Yeah.

BARTON: But in any case, that sort of—it was sort of a little hub of political discussion and political activity.

CARBONE: Mm-hm. Did you come from a religious family?

BARTON: Not particularly. I was raised as a Unitarian, and my dad was a Unitarian; my mother was Russian Orthodox, actually. And so I was raised Unitarian, which, if you know anything about Unitarian faith, sort of believes that all religions are accurate. [Both chuckle.] Or have some—some commonalities, I guess, is the best way to say that.

CARBONE: Yes.

And so, coming back to the idea of, you know, the DCU as a hotbed of activity, can you talk more about those first years of involvement in those teach-ins and protests and how that all began?

BARTON: Well, it—it's—it's difficult to reconstruct in my mind because, as you might imagine, as a student at Dartmouth and a student from a public school setting, I was always struggling to keep up academically.

CARBONE: [Chuckles.]

BARTON: Not that I had trouble performing, because I ended up getting honors in French when I graduated and did—did pretty well, but in my first couple of years, I had to really work hard, so I spent a lot of time in the library—a lot of time in the library, a lot of time studying. So every once in a while, I would go to DCU meetings, get involved, do some tutoring. I was always doing my tennis on—on the side as well. So very restricted in terms of time. I was not one of the organizers of any of the first teach-ins or some of the first events. I'm going to mention some films that came to the campus that were important to me.

So I would attend these events. I wasn't an organizer. I couldn't tell you who did some of the organizing. Some of the teach-ins I think were organized by the professors, themselves, and you may have already interviewed them or know about them. But some of the history professors or whatever would just have a teach-in, and somebody would visit the campus or somebody would talk. And I'd try to go to those. I probably didn't go to all of them. But my involvement with DCU—I think the—attending some of those teach-ins.

The films that came to Dartmouth I believe—I would say they came from some outfit or with some Canadians.

CARBONE: [Chuckles.]

BARTON: They came down to Dartmouth, showed these—these were Cuban films, which I think were embargoed in the United States. They were made by a guy named Santiago Álvarez [Román], a very famous Cuban filmmaker, who I think died a year or two ago. Documentary films about what the struggle was all about in Vietnam, from the North Vietnamese or, let's say, from the revolutionary side of the Vietnam War.

And these films were shown at Dartmouth. I don't know. My recollection is—if you ask me whether they were shown at the Hop [Hopkins Center for the Arts in Hanover, New Hampshire] or not, I would probably say, "I don't think so." But, you know, maybe 50, 100 students attended those films.

The films were very important to me—

CARBONE: Mm-hm.

BARTON: —not because—I mean, they did come across a little bit as slightly propagandistic but on the whole showing a side of Vietnam that we were not seeing at all in terms of U.S. news or U.S. news reporting or TV reporting here. And showed a very different side of the struggle that the Vietnamese were in and gave a very different sort of spin on what their anti-Colonial struggle was all about, both against the French and, now, sort of opposing the South Vietnamese government that was getting American advisers and American support. So—and we all recognized it as somewhat [chuckles] propagandistic, but intriguing in terms of what it was showing.

CARBONE: Yeah.

BARTON: So that and the teach-ins and my involvement with DCU sort of led to some questioning about U.S. involvement and what it meant and what the Vietnamese were doing and what all of the Vietnam War meant to the Vietnamese. That was important to me.

And then both my junior and senior years, I did the Foreign Study [Program] in France. I was very interested in French language and wanted to go to France. And I went both my junior and senior year. I went back as a senior because I led two groups. There were two Dartmouth groups in France.

CARBONE: Mm-hm.

BARTON: And I was sort of asked to go back as—as a leader of the groups to make sure everything went smoothly. It was kind of a difficult position [chuckles], actually, as you might imagine.

CARBONE: [Chuckles.]

BARTON: But it was very rewarding. But in France, of course, when I stayed with French families, I went over the summer before each year to stay with French families through The Experiment in International Living, and almost every family

but particularly a French family that I've now stayed in touch with for 50 years—

CARBONE: Wow!

BARTON: —questioned me heavily about Vietnam.

CARBONE: Mm-hm.

BARTON: In other words,—

CARBONE: And this was 19- —

BARTON: —"Why is the United"—

CARBONE: —65.

BARTON: Pardon?

CARBONE: I said this was 1965.

BARTON: This would have been the fall of—the fall of '64, actually.

CARBONE: Fall of '64.

BARTON: And the fall of '65.

CARBONE: Mm-hm.

BARTON: The fall of '64, fall of '65, and questioning me heavily. "Why is the United States getting involved in Vietnam? We learned our lesson. We were the Colonial power in Vietnam, and the Vietnamese defeated us. Why is the United States going in there? What do you hope to accomplish?" [Chuckles.] You know, pretty tough questions and not just asked one time,—

CARBONE: Yeah.

BARTON: —asked numerous times. The French aren't very bashful.

CARBONE: [Chuckles.]

BARTON: So it was excellent for my French, but I had to be able to answer these questions [both chuckle], and, again, it—it

caused me to sort of—you know, not that I was trying to—I mean, I would try to sort of defend the involvement in some way, shape or form, but it caused me to ask questions of myself and obviously of my own government as to, "Okay, why *are* we getting involved—

CARBONE: Mm-hm.

BARTON: —and getting involved so heavily?"

CARBONE: Yeah.

And so following the assassination of President Kennedy and [President Lyndon B.] Johnson takes office and kind of begins to shift the focus of U.S. involvement in Vietnam, was that something that you were cognizant of in 1963 and beginning to question, or did that come later, as with, like, the Gulf of Tonkin [incident] and as the U.S.'s role became more apparent?

BARTON: As I said, I mean it was casual conversations were, let's say, conversations around the table at the Dartmouth Christian Union or whatever, but I think we were aware that the involvement was increasing and that there were questions raised either in these teach-ins or at various points, let's say, by these films, by discussions of—"Okay, what—what is happening here? We need to find more out about this." And then, of course, then we would put our heads back into the physics book or [both chuckle] or to the French book or to the government book, and—and so it was a little bit of disjointed, distracted political discussion about an increasing American involvement in Vietnam.

But I would say, yes—I mean, particularly after Kennedy was shot and Johnson took over, there was more sort of war rhetoric going on,—

CARBONE: Mm-hm.

BARTON: —and it became obvious that there was—you know, probably there was going to—there was going to be heavy American involvement here in Vietnam. And, of course, that was being reported in the press, but it—it just sort of became more and more of an issue.

CARBONE: Mm-hm. And so you—the—these Foreign Study Programs that you participated in [in] France—was that the entire year or just a semester?

BARTON: Just the fall term, just the fall term, but I went over both summers before, so it was six months my junior year and six months my senior year.

CARBONE: Mm-hm. And so in 1964, the first summer that you would have been there—that is when the—kind of the escalation of the war first begins. Johnson—the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution kind of gives Johnson that power. Was that something that the French people were talking about? Was that something you were hearing a lot about?

BARTON: Yes, yeah, definitely. Yeah, yeah, definitely. You know, the basic French question by—usually it was the fathers of these families—to me was, you know, "Why is the United States doing this? What—what do you hope to accomplish in Vietnam that we weren't able to accomplish by trying to keep it as a colony?" And I had answers, but they weren't good ones. [Chuckles.]

CARBONE: Yeah. [Chuckles.]

BARTON: And, you know, again, it wasn't—it wasn't as though around the dinner table this happened every evening, but it—it happened often enough that when I try to reflect back on my years at Dartmouth and what caused me to question our involvement, it was a key piece.

CARBONE: Mm-hm.

BARTON: The films—the films—you know, discussions at the DCU, the films and the experience—the teach-ins, of course, but—the teach-ins, again, were sort of professors talking about foreign policy and engagement, and, yes, that was interesting, but as a student you were looking for sort of something to latch onto in terms of almost something tactile, something you could touch. And the films were very visual, and the person-to-person questioning in France was very personal. You know, "You're an American. What is your country doing? Why are you doing this?

CARBONE: Yeah.

BARTON: And it wasn't that they were supporting what was happening in Vietnam, it was that they felt an affinity to the United States and they—they—they just were troubled by the United States—I mean, they saw a very slippery slope for the United States' involvement in Vietnam, the French did, at least the French families—

CARBONE: Yes.

BARTON: —that I was with.

CARBONE: [Chuckles.] Were your views, as shaped by, you know, these movies kind of giving a perspective of the North Vietnamese beliefs and conversations at Dartmouth Christian Union and then conversations with your French host family, do you think that your perception of the Vietnam War was—I mean, there were other students involved in protests on campus, but do you think you had a unique outlook?

BARTON: It was—it was—I would say it was—[Chuckles.] For me, personally, it—it had an impact, and a lasting impact because my involvement with the Vietnam issue lasted ten years. I mean, it's lasted a lifetime, but lasted from the time I was at Dartmouth till peace was signed in '75, so well over ten years of engagement in Vietnam.

I will say that some of those initial questions that I raised to myself—*Is my country doing the right thing?*—were difficult ones for me because I was raised in a time—okay, there was some questioning in my family, I guess, about which party should win an election or what was the best course and whether wars were advisable or not [chuckles], but beyond that, you know, everything was—you know, America is great, America is a wonderful country. You know, there was this huge outpouring of enthusiasm on Kennedy when he was elected. You know, America can go to the moon, Americans can do anything.

And so, you know, I was—I was part of that. I loved my country. I thought my country was doing absolutely all the right things, and then, boom! All of a sudden, Kennedy is

shot, and people are raising questions about our engagement in Vietnam, and I had to do some severe questioning.

CARBONE: Yeah.

BARTON: I mean I—I sp-—in—in November of ’63 [chuckles], when Kennedy was shot, I spent a lot of—I didn’t go home for Thanksgiving. I spent a lot of quiet days wandering the campus,—

CARBONE: Yeah.

BARTON: —wondering what was happening to my country, what was going on, and it was—it was troubling.

CARBONE: Yeah. Were your beliefs similar to the beliefs that your parents held about the direction of U.S. politics?

BARTON: Well, I would say some of my views related to politics in general—in other words, support for the Democratic Party was, yes, from my father. Feelings about the importance of international agreements and world peace and international understanding, yes, were from my father.

CARBONE: Mm-hm.

BARTON: I took a bit of a more activist approach both at Dartmouth and afterwards, but I always—you know, I felt support from my family. I mean, I’ll get to the part where I go—I actually go to Vietnam [chuckles] to work for the Quakers, and that troubled them, but they were supportive.

CARBONE: Yes.

BARTON: I don’t think they were—they were concerned. And when I came back and was very active in the peace movement and traveled around speaking, they were concerned, concerned for my health, I guess, but they were—I always felt a sense of support for them, but that I was probably a little more active than they—than they would have liked.

CARBONE: Mm-hm. [Chuckles.]

BARTON: Anyway.

CARBONE: So coming back to Dartmouth, you're away junior and senior year—like, fall in France,—

BARTON: Yeah.

CARBONE: —and then you would return. Can you tell me more about the campus that you were returning to and the—your activism on campus?

BARTON: Well, yes, I can do that. I think—I mean, most of my activities with the DCU, I would say, were in the first three years and particularly in the second year, my sophomore year. And I'm trying to make sure here, in terms of my history. I guess you can check some of these things. There was an international dormitory on campus, Cutter Hall?

CARBONE: Yes, I saw that you were involved in that.

BARTON: Okay, well, I was at Cutter Hall. I think—I think it was my sophomore year. I had very close friends there. Again, I looked for the camaraderie, the sort of political discussions, international discussions. Some of the foreign students at Dartmouth stayed at Cutter Hall. It was a small dormitory. We had visitors to the campus stay at Cutter Hall, and we would serve those visitors to the campus—they would be coming to speak. We would serve them breakfast. And maybe two of us would prepare them breakfast and sit down around a round table with the visitors to campus. It was fantastic.

CARBONE: Yeah.

BARTON: And one of the visitors happened to be Malcolm X.

CARBONE: Wow.

BARTON: [Chuckles.] You know, there you are, serving breakfast to Malcolm X, and he is talking, of course, about his issues then, which were: Is it better in terms of the eventual outcome for the—for *our* country that Black Muslims separate themselves into separate communities and then sort of develop that way, or is integration the way to go? So

that's what he was addressing in the rest of the campus. But with us—he shared with us, actually, that many Muslims were adamantly against him and he feared for his life.

CARBONE: Mhm. Wow.

BARTON: And we didn't know a thing about it. I mean, he's sharing that with us around the breakfast table. [Both chuckle.]

CARBONE: A bunch of 19-year-olds.

BARTON: Yeah. And—well, we didn't know what to do with it. But anyway, that—Cutter Hall and involvement with DCU was key my sophomore year, I think.

Then in both my junior and senior years, I was coming back after a fall term abroad. I was back with the tennis team both years [chuckles], trying to practice in the winter, trying to get ready for the spring season,—

CARBONE: [Chuckles.]

BARTON: —trying to do well in my courses, which I was doing by my junior and senior years, and my senior year actually, I did tutorials in France with a Dartmouth professor, which was very, very key, so I got very into French literature and actually lived by my myself the spring term of my senior year. I lived off campus in an apartment above Occom Pond [chuckles] because I just wanted to study French literature all the time. [Both chuckle.] So I was sort of a hermit. That's what I imagined Dartmouth was going to be this sort of—a monastic existence of just reading in the woods [chuckles], but it didn't turn out that way, which is fine. But in any case,—what was I going to say?

So in terms of activities on campus, I would do a few activities, but, again, I wasn't an organizer or, you know, active in any particular protests on campus. I don't really remember whether there were any protests on campus. It was just, you know, a growing number of students that were concerned, concerned about the war, talking about the war.

But, again, you know, my life sort of had been rocked a little bit when Malcolm X *was* assassinated in February of '65.

That was my junior year, when I came back. And so both with Kennedy being shot in ’63 and Malcolm X being shot in ’65, worse things to come, but—[Chuckles.]. Anyway, there was—it was more—I guess for me anyway, I was able to sort of keep up with what the opposition to the war was doing, and there was more sort of general ferment or knowledge on campus about what was—why it was important to oppose the war.

Lots of—you know, there was a certain amount of debate because obviously a lot of students, probably the overwhelming majority, supported the war, and, you know, many of them were anticipating going into the military.

CARBONE: Yeah. Was that ever—like, did those opposing views about the war ever come to a head? Were there, like, arguments that you would get into with your classmates?

BARTON: Not really. I mean, any discussions that were had seemed to be innocuous. But, again, you know how it is on campus. I mean, I was in [chuckles]—I was in a fraternity, Delta Upsilon, that went local.

CARBONE: Yes.

BARTON: Became the Foley House. And most of the members of that fraternity were quite liberal and wanted change and wanted social change was well as political change. I was involved with the DCU, so most of the people there were liberal.

CARBONE: [Chuckles.]

BARTON: Discussions that happened in the classroom were always—you know, didn’t get violent or didn’t get angry. They were simply discussion about, “Okay, what’s happening here? What decisions are being made?” And there was sort of a—I don’t—I don’t remember any sort of confrontations between, let’s say, antiwar protesters and pro-Vietnam War people. I don’t remember that. I remember discussions. I was in the Casque and Gauntlet honorary society my senior year. I remember discussions there amongst people, some that supported that war and some that were against, but who were—you know, they ended

up being sort of friendly discussions, where you would agree to disagree at the end of the discussion.

CARBONE: Yeah.

BARTON: And those—I remember those as positive. In other words, I was pretty assured of my position, and I became more assured as I heard the arguments [chuckles] in favor of the war.

CARBONE: Yeah.

BARTON: You know, because I was testing myself as I'd done in France, with trying to support the war. [Both chuckle.]

CARBONE: In your non-native language.

BARTON: [Unintelligible]. Right.

CARBONE: So you graduate in 1966. You're a French major. Did you have immediate plans? Because eventually you do go on and attend graduate school, but not until 1968.

BARTON: Right. Well, I—I knew that I wanted to do international affairs or foreign policy work, but I didn't have the means to go to graduate school right away, in terms of money. A friend of my brother's had suggested a—there was a teaching fellowship at Philips Academy Andover?

CARBONE: Mm-hm. Yep.

BARTON: And it was a teaching fellowship in French, and as I explained to you, because I went to France twice, I became, you know, quite fluent as a translator, later, for the State Department, in French. But I—I realized that *if I don't do something with my French in the next couple of years, not that I would lose it, but I'm not gonna be a French professor.* I knew I didn't want to do that. I wanted to do foreign policy and international affairs.

So anyway, I was made aware of this teaching fellowship at Philips Academy Andover, and I thought, *Okay, I can do that.* So I applied for it and got it. Went there my first year under a teaching fellowship, and then the French department

wanted me to stay on a second year, to be a regular French teacher at Andover. So I did that two years, and even though I was paid very little, I was able to—you get your housing, so I was able to save some money for graduate school. So after two years of teaching at Philips Academy Andover, I then went to graduate school.

CARBONE: Mm-hm. And what was the—were you involved in Vietnam or activism while at Philips—Philips Academy?

BARTON: Well, every once in a while. The approach to teaching French at Andover was you never use English in the classroom. But there were occasions on campus where there were discussions about what's happening in Vietnam. They were just sort of general seminar discussions or a teacher would, you know, offer a discussion. I wouldn't particularly, but there were discussions on campus about the war, but mostly I was not—

CARBONE: Yeah.

BARTON: —very active or raising those questions in the classroom. But what happened in '68 [chuckles], at the end of my teaching time, was fairly important: [the Rev. Dr.] Martin Luther King [Jr.] being shot in the spring of '68, Robert [F.] Kennedy being shot in June of '68.

CARBONE: Mm-hm.

BARTON: And then [chuckles]—and here's a strange Dartmouth connection: [William S.] Bill Smoyer [Class of 1967]—are you aware of—

CARBONE: Mm-hm.

BARTON: He was a hockey player at Dartmouth. He was killed [in Vietnam] in July of '68, and that—somehow that was important to me because I had known Bill's older brother, having—you know, I was a younger brother; Bill was a younger brother of an older brother at Dartmouth. [Chuckles.] I had an older brother at Dartmouth. Bill's older brother was a tennis player, and we had played tennis together. When I was a freshman, I think he was a senior. And he was on the tennis team. So I felt a real connection to

him, and it was—I don't know, having a Dartmouth person that you knew, and you knew his brother be shot in Vietnam and feeling very, very strongly that, gee, I couldn't—couldn't justify his death somehow. I couldn't—I couldn't feel good about his dying for my country. It was a very painful—very painful marker in my life, I guess, related to Vietnam. So a real personal loss, but a feeling that *golly,* you know, *why—why—why did that happen?* [Chuckles.]

CARBONE: Yeah. And, I mean, this is all happening amidst, like, just kind of a terrible year, with Martin Luther King's assassination in April and then Robert Kennedy being shot in June. What was your—

BARTON: And the other thing I should I mention about the sum- [Chuckles.]. The summer of '63, I went—I think—I'm trying to—I was trying to remember [chuckles]. You know, we're going back 53, 54 years here. I'm trying to remember why I did this. But in the summer of my freshman year after Dartmouth, I went to work in a camp in New York State that took kids from the inner city in New York City and took them out to this camp.

CARBONE: Mm-hm. In—

BARTON: And—

CARBONE: —rural—

BARTON: In rural New York. And I was a counselor there. And—and you know, for me it was sort of my civil rights experience [chuckles] because all the campers were either Puerto Rican or black.

CARBONE: Oh, wow.

BARTON: It was—it was—and they really were inner-city kids. So when we'd take them out camping in the woods, there was lots of rock throwing and quite a bit of violence, which you had to deal with.

CARBONE: Yeah.

BARTON: And I think I was a good counselor, and I think I dealt with [chuckles]—dealt with those incidents effectively, and anyway, that was a strong experience. And then I went from there—I got to know a couple of the cooks at the—at the camp. They were both Puerto Rican, and they came down to Washington to me for the civil rights march [the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom] in August of '63.

CARBONE: Oh, wow.

BARTON: So, again, if you're looking for ways in which my either antiwar views or civil rights views or whatever you want to call them,—leftist views or liberal views, whatever, were reinforced again by the civil rights March on Washington in August of '63. I remember being crunched up in a crowd on the [Lincoln Memorial] Reflecting Pool, listening to Martin Luther King give his speech. I mean it was, you know, marching with a couple of Puerto Ricans from the inner city of—of New York City. And they were going back to a drug-infested neighborhood [chuckles]—

CARBONE: Yeah.

BARTON: —in New York, so it was—it was kind of a pivotal moment also in my Dartmouth experience, even though it wasn't at Dartmouth.

CARBONE: Yeah.

BARTON: Sorry I took you—I took you back there, but—[Chuckles.]

CARBONE: No, no, that was—it's fascinating! Can you tell me more about the 1963—the March on Washington?

BARTON: Well, it was—you know, I felt like, okay, I had had a mild civil rights experience by, you know, counseling at a camp of most inner-city kids, but, again, seeing—seeing the protests, participating in the demonstration, I saw the power of protest. I saw the power of demonstration. I saw the movement that was happening, and I—I respected it. It was—it was, like, *Okay, we—we—we are going to be able to change things, and change is possible.*

Again, got sort of a violent comeuppance with the assassination of JFK, but the—the sort of feeling that I had there lasted. In other words, most [chuckles]—most people attribute some of our involvement in Vietnam to Kennedy.

CARBONE: Mm-hm.

BARTON: And I think that's accurate, that he did get advisers involved early on. But my respect for him and my respect for his brother say to me, by the civil rights movement taking place in the summer, and by what was happening at Dartmouth in terms of teach-ins and sort of questioning about why are we involved in Vietnam, meant to me that had Kennedy not been assassinated, he would have somehow realized that our policy was wrong and disengaged from Vietnam. And I felt the same way about his brother. His brother, of course, was assassinated in '68. But certainly Robert Kennedy changed his views on Vietnam before he was assassinated and was running on that kind of antiwar platform. And that's pretty early in terms of the war's development and buildup.

And so I don't—I have a lot of trouble with those that argue that, "Oh, well, you know, Kennedy supported the Vietnam War and that's how we got in."

In any case [chuckles]—you know I am a professor, so if I talk too much, you have to cut me off. [Both chuckle.]

CARBONE: No, this is really wonderful. So you were a supporter of Robert Kennedy. He's shot and assassinated, and then there's the Democratic National Convention. Were you—could you just talk to me about that, tell me more of—

BARTON: Well, after the two years in Andover, then I went to Johns Hopkins School of [Advanced] International Studies in Washington, D.C. And just before that, of course, Robert Kennedy is shot, you know, and, as I said, Bill Smoyer in July of '68. You know, my feelings were still, *Okay, protests and opposition to the war can succeed here*. *And just in the same way that the civil rights movement can continue achieving results, if the protests and demonstrations continue and the outcry continues, that those types of demonstrations and protests are effective and can—can bear fruit.*

And so while at Johns Hopkins—again, it was sort of, *Okay, I'm doing academics. I'm preparing for a carrier, but if there are marches on Washington*—I think those were both in '69, the moratorium and the mobilization—

CARBONE: Mm-hm, mm-hm.

BARTON: —you know, I got involved in sort of some antiwar—an antiwar group at Johns Hopkins SAIS [pronounced to rhyme with "ice"], and we actually—I think for both marches, we volunteered as a group to sort of be—they were called march marshals. I don't know whether you've been involved in any protest or demonstration, but there have to be march marshals to keep the demonstrators going down the right road. [Both chuckle.]

And so anyway, we—I stayed involved, and while I was at Johns Hopkins, my wife then, who is not my wife now, but my wife then was teaching in high school, and so I did a couple of discussions at—at her high school and I believe a couple of other high schools where we knew other high school teachers, to sort of raise questions about the war. And students were asking if they should participate in a demonstration and that type of thing.

So there were lots of—around that time, '68, '69, a lot of questions were being raised about the war. A lot of high school teachers and university teachers were doing more and more teach-ins, and so I—I got involved in some of those.

CARBONE: Yeah. So you do. You begin studies at the John Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies in 1968, were you—and you knew that you wanted to work in, like, international relations. Were you at all conflicted about kind of potentially working for the government at a time when you didn't necessarily agree with the foreign policy?

BARTON: Well, I didn't—I didn't lose my faith in democracy. I didn't lose my faith in the ability of demonstration and protest and opposition to succeeding and I don't know whether that was a lesson from my father or lesson from the Kennedy brothers

or a lesson from Malcolm X or a lesson from Martin Luther King—

CARBONE: [Chuckles.]

BARTON: —but a feeling that one had to have faith that eventually our democratic process was going to succeed in—in changing things around and that if—you know, the opposition to the war was building. There was obviously more on the, let's say, the established media about the war and about the downsides to the war, but—and protests were increasing.

CARBONE: Yeah.

BARTON: The moratorium, which was in October of '69, was, you know, two, three hundred thousand people, and then the mobilization in November of '69 was well over a half million. So those were enormous protests, and not that you would feel—I don't know how to describe it. You wouldn't feel just, oh, oh, energized from that; you would just—you felt like, *Okay, things—things can change, and I don't want to be <u>too</u> patient because the war is ongoing.* And obviously, at that point in the war, you're seeing pictures every evening of civilians being killed and bombing happening and fighting here, there and everywhere in Vietnam. But it was a feeling that *this is taking too long, but change will—change will happen here.* Anyway, that's what *I* was feeling.

CARBONE: Yeah. And what was it like to be in or just outside of Washington, D.C., with all this going on and this kind of fervor?

BARTON: Well, again, one had a sense that things *were* changing. Politicians were speaking up. There was opposition to the war. People really didn't know how to get that expressed, but—and, you know, some lines were being drawn. There's no question that some, let's say—I hope you don't mind if I talk about the peace movement, but, I mean, it was a movement. But there were—there were decisions within the peace movement—I mean, [unintelligible]. In '69 there were the peaceful demonstrations that took place, let's say, on a Saturday, and on the Friday night, the more radical fringe of the peace movement would demonstrate in front of the South Vietnamese embassy and get tear-gassed.

CARBONE: Mm-hm.

BARTON: And so—but, again, you might be—you might say, "Oh, well, there's too much of a fringe group now, and they're spoiling the image of peaceful protests," but people were frustrated at how long the—how long the change was. Like I was expressing, I wasn't of that opinion, although I was frustrated that it did seem to be taking a long time, and I think there was, in my view, a real setback when Robert Kennedy was assassinated because I think Robert Kennedy would have ended the war.

CARBONE: Mm-hm. Was your involvement with the demonstrations and activities in Washington, D.C., through Johns Hopkins student organizations or—

BARTON: Yes.

CARBONE: —were you involved with other—

BARTON: It was just an informal group of students at Johns Hopkins. It wasn't a formal—formal group of any kind, but we were, as one of the institutions in Washington, we were asked to provide marshals, and, you know, there was a group of us that—you haven't been to graduate school yet [chuckles], but, you know—

CARBONE: [Chuckles.]

BARTON: —graduates students. We'd just sort of sit around the table and we would—we would gather because we all opposed the war and were trying to figure out what to do and asking some of the questions you just asked me about, "Okay, well, if we oppose the war and oppose the current majority or president in terms of their increasing the involvement in Vietnam, how are we going to have a career at State Department or with the World Bank or whatever?" So we would sit around and discuss between courses or between reading in the library those types of things. But when the request came to the school, "Okay, we need responsible students to be marshals at the demonstration. How many people can you offer?", we would round up many people, and some actually who felt conflicted about whether or not

they supported the war or not and actually some foreign students at—at the school as well, who would participate as marshals. “Let’s just participate as marshals and support the idea of the demonstration, but we won’t—some of us may not necessarily be opposed to the war.”

CARBONE: Mm-hm.

BARTON: So that’s—that was—that was Johns Hopkins. [Both chuckle.]

CARBONE: So in, like, 1969, 1970, there’s a ton of student demonstration against the war in Vietnam. In 1969 there’s the Parkhurst [Hall] takeover at Dartmouth. There are similar protests at Johns Hopkins against the presence of the ROTC on campus. Was that something that you were at all aware of as a graduate student, or kind of outside your realm?

BARTON: Yes, I was aware of all of that, of course, and followed it. For example, opposing ROTC on campus at Johns Hopkins was in Baltimore. We were in Washington.

CARBONE: Oh, okay.

BARTON: Johns Hopkins School of [Advanced] International Studies is actually in Washington, D.C. It still is.

CARBONE: Okay.

BARTON: So we were separated from the—it’s called the Homewood Campus up in Baltimore. But—yeah, I mean, obviously very active—you’ll see in a minute, if we talk about how did I end up in Vietnam for two years [chuckles] after—after Johns Hopkins?

CARBONE: [Chuckles.]

BARTON: The dean at Johns Hopkins School of [Advanced] International Studies knew that I was—that I was an activist. I was basically a student activist even as a graduate student. And he—for example, one of the things [chuckles]—I tell my students now at George Washington [University] when they’re asked to fill out a questionnaire about my course—do

you do that at Dartmouth? Do you have questionnaires about how successful the course was?

CARBONE: Yup. Yes. [Chuckles.] You can't see your grades unless you do that.

BARTON: "When you're asked to do that," I say, "you need to do that because when I was a student at—at Johns Hopkins, that's what I formed a protest about." I wanted—I wanted students to have a right to fill out questionnaires about a course. Was it good? Was the professor good? Did it cover the material? Did it—you know.

CARBONE: Mm-hm.

BARTON: And I lead the group that, you know, presented out petition [chuckles] to the—to the dean, so he knew I was an activist. [Both chuckle.] And at the end of my time at Johns Hopkins, he suggested a number of different things I should look at in terms of a career, but he's the one that suggested the American Friends Service Committee, the Quaker service organization up in Philadelphia. He said, "I think they have a number of activities world wide—seminar activities and other things that you might be interested in." And he was—he was a good person. I think he—I think he respected my activism, because hopefully I did it responsibly. [Both chuckle.] And it turned out to be a good suggestion in terms of—in terms of my future.

CARBONE: Yeah. So you graduate from graduate school in 1970. And by that time, the United States is using the lottery system for the draft, and you've just ended your education. Can you tell me about your experiences with that?

BARTON: With what? I'm sorry?

CARBONE: So you've finished your schooling, and you choose to go and work with the American Friends Socie- —Friends Service Committee, which is a Quaker organization. So I was just wondering if you could tell me more about, you know, Quakerism and your choice to go to Vietnam while at the same time there's, like, a lottery draft in the United States.

BARTON: Right. Well, as I said, this dean suggested talking to the people up in Philadelphia. That's where the American Friends Service Committee is based. So I—I did that. And they were interested in my working in—part of my background that I didn't mention to you was—let's see, when was that?

CARBONE: [Chuckles.]

BARTON: [Pause.] Anyway, one—one summer around Dartmouth, I went to—well, anyway, the American Friends Service Committee was interested in having me run a seminar program in West Africa. Part of the reason for that was that I had gone on a leadership exchange in the summer, and I was trying to remember which summer it was, one of the summers from Dartmouth.

CARBONE: It must have been your sophomore summer.

BARTON: No, it was--it was after my Fr- —so it might have even been when I graduated from Dartmouth. That summer after I graduated, I went to Africa on a leadership exchange because the summers before my foreign study, I had participated in the Experiment in International Living, which then was based in Putney, Vermont, and stayed with French families before my foreign study. And the Experiment was cooperating with the Dartmouth Foreign Study Program and placing students with families.

So they asked me to represent them on this leadership exchange to French-speaking west Africa, and I did that the summer after my senior year.

CARBONE: Okay.

BARTON: It was—it was phenomenal. We traveled with an African Studies professor from—I think he was teaching at Columbia [University] then, or NYU [New York University]. Anyway, we traveled to four countries in French-speaking west Africa. So the American Friends Service Committee noted that, and they said, "Well, we have a seminar program in"—I forget where it was, whether it was in—ooh, the Ivory Coast or Senegal or someplace, "and we'd like to you do that."

But at that point, also, I had—you know, my wife and I shared quite a bit of activities, not only anti-Vietnam activities but teaching and travel, and we wanted to try to get a position together, doing something after my graduate school. And so they said, "Well, we don't have any positions for two people, except we do have a position in Vietnam for co-directors of a hospital program that we've got going in Vietnam."

CARBONE: Mm-hm.

BARTON: And I said, "Well, I don't think any American should be in Vietnam." And they turned to me, and they said, "Well, I think, then, you're the person we need." [Both chuckle.]

CARBONE: So my wife and I went up, and we had two days of interviews with the American Friends Service Committee, and they basically convinced us that the program in Vietnam was a good one. It was providing prosthetics, artificial arms and legs, for Vietnamese civilians injured in the war. That was a running—sometimes it's called the rehabilitation hospital. And that our major responsibility would be yes, to direct the foreign staff. There were Americans and British—not all Quakers, but Quaker oriented, I guess, staff there: physical therapists, orthopedic surgeons and what they call generalists, supporting the Quaker program there. And we would be responsible for that staff. But they said, "Your major responsibility is reporting on the impact of the war on the civilian population."

So they convinced us that this—what they called a "peace witness" responsibility and what I guess I would call reporting on the war or—

CARBONE: [Chuckles.]

BARTON: —reporting on—on the impact of the war on the civilian population—was, you know, a major component and convinced us that we should do that. And so between really end of '70, '71 to '73, my wife then, Jane [Couser] Barton, and myself worked at that hospital in a very poor province of Vietnam, Quảng Ngãi Province. And that was a very, very intense experience, as you might imagine.

And so there you are. I'm an anti-Vietnam activist through Dartmouth and through Johns Hopkins [chuckles], and—and I end up in Vietnam!

CARBONE: [Chuckles.]

BARTON: So most—again, it was an intense experience because there were lots of things that needed to be done: supplies to the hospital, making sure that the people that were there as volunteers, either as orthopedic surgeons or physical therapists or prosthetics experts, didn't burn out. And so a lot of management responsibilities, which were fine and maybe a little bit massive in terms of our age, because at that point I was only 27 years old or 28, anyway,—

CARBONE: [Chuckles.]

BARTON: —which is a pretty heavy responsibility. But a lot of our work was reporting on the war, reporting on the impact on the civilian population. And so we did that. Of course, the Quaker organization used that information for peace movement purposes, to report on the impact of the war on the civilian population: mine explosions, bombing—you know, even some nasty herbicides that were used and Napalm that were used. And we would see those injuries at the hospital and report on them.

The province that we were in, this Quảng Ngãi Province, was heavily fought over, never really controlled by the South Vietnamese government, never really controlled—hadn't been controlled by the French when the French were there. The hospital, itself, was only a couple of miles from Mỹ Lai, and so just a huge number of refugees, a huge number of civilians injured in the war. This Quaker hospital provided, well, surgical services and then physical therapy and prosthetics, so a lot of Vietnamese without arms and legs were equipped with arms and legs so they could resume somewhat of a normal life.

CARBONE: Mm-hm.

BARTON: And that was impressive. To me and not part of my experience [chuckles] but having skilled people there from a lot of different countries, working for the Quakers, was

effective, and as opposed to some development projects where the development projects seemed to just go on and on, the American Friends Service Committee and the Quakers have this approach of: Well, we need to train local people to do this work so that we don't stay forever.

CARBONE: Mm-hm.

BARTON: You there? Yeah.

So that—that was part of our responsibility as well, was getting that training done so there would be Vietnamese prosthetists, Vietnamese physical therapists, Vietnamese surgical assistants that could take over that work eventually. So the staff—during the two years there, the staff sort of—foreign staff decreased from, let's say, 15 to eight. I mean, it went in half or something.

So there was a lot of reporting on the war. A lot of journalists would come through our area, wanting to see the hospital, wanting to talk to civilians on what their experience was. And that was part of our responsibility as well. Taking patients home to their villages after they'd been treated at the hospital was something that I did on a 50cc motorcycle [both chuckle], taking patients on a motorcycle back to their villages.

And that was a fairly dangerous [chuckles] activity, but I was able to sort of learn some Vietnamese, so I had enough Vietnamese to be able to communicate at a pretty basic level. I was—I was illiterate. I couldn't read Vietnamese because it's tonal, but I could speak it well enough to get along and well enough to—that was really my major security, was being able to speak Vietnamese, because there was—incredibly enough, amongst the Vietnamese population, they knew that there was an American peace movement. They knew that the Quakers were there to represent a different kind of American presence in Vietnam. And they were able to draw that distinction.

And when the Quakers had been there long enough, by the time that I got there in '71, that there was a fairly good understanding: "Oh, you're running the hospital." "Oh, you're

Quakers, so you don't support the war." So that was—provided some amount of security.

CARBONE: Yeah. Can you—

BARTON: The other issue that we got very involved in was the political prisoner issue, and that becomes important when we come back to the States, because we did lots of speaking for two years about the political prisoner issue.

CARBONE: Yeah. Will you—so this rehabilitation hospital that you come to and you're co-director with your wife—can you tell me more about, you know, what it was first like to, you know, step off the plane in Vietnam and kind of the organization that you arrived at?

BARTON: Yes. And we were very well prepared by—by the American Friends Service Committee in Philadelphia. We went through an extensive sort of training there. We talked to Quakers that had served in Vietnam, at that program. There were a couple of very good directors of the program, American directors of the program in Philadelphia, so we went through an extensive sort of training before going, then additional training in Hong Kong and then language training in Saigon before then going up to Quảng Ngãi. Quảng Ngãi is literally a horse-cart town. There's a runway at the Quảng Ngãi airport, but it's about as long as the Dartmouth football field, just a small little cement building that's the airport [chuckles]—airport—yeah.

And so hard to be prepared for that. I mean, it's—it's very—very few cars, if any, in Quảng Ngãi village—in Quảng Ngãi town, open markets, lots of refugees. The buildings where the Quaker teams stayed—all of the team members stayed together in a facility. We actually had some Vietnamese that were working at the hospital stay at that building with us, so all of—a lot of the Quaker teams stayed together.

And it was rural Vietnam. I think we were prepared for it in terms of knowing what we were getting into, but I think the number of patients, the seriousness of their injury, the fact that you heard rocket fire every evening, that you did hear bombing in the distance, that you did hear rifle fire during your day—those things are hard to sort of—even though

you're told about them ahead of time—hard to imagine how you're going to react when you're actually there.

But everybody's pulling together. It's kind of a team effort. And the Vietnamese are so positive, energetic, strong in terms of their ability to struggle through unbelievable injuries—was heartening to the point where you felt like you couldn't complain about anything. [Chuckles.] You just were amazed at the perseverance of the people, moved off of their villages, moved off of their land, huddled together in refugee camps and then suffering injuries. Little children between five and ten taking care of a grandfather or grandmother that had been injured by a mine injury. They're staying with their grandmother, grandfather at the hospital, taking care of them.

And all positive, all positive, not—not feeling—you know, not feeling anger, certainly towards us in terms of assisting them with medical—medical treatment and understanding the difference between Americans that opposed the war and Americans that were conducting the war.

CARBONE: Mm-hm.

BARTON: So that was all encouraging and positive and kept me and us, my wife and I—kept us going for two years. We would just—it was—it was—it wasn't that it was easy, but it was—it was—it was possible [chuckles]—

CARBONE: Yeah. How many—

BARTON: —to keep some sort of a positive attitude. That "Well, the reporting we're doing on the war, its impact on the civilian population, will somehow carry the day to—to stop this horrible war that's happening" very close to where we were.

CARBONE: Yeah. How many patients were there at any given time in the hospital?

BARTON: Well, the—the—I should have called it more of a rehab center.

CARBONE: Okay.

BARTON: The hospital—it was on the grounds of the province hospital. So the province hospital was a fairly big, complex, I would say, with several hundred patients at any one time. Our facility probably had anywhere from 20 to 50 patients at one time, and those would be patients either waiting for surgery or patients involved in physical therapy after surgery or after having an amputation or patients involved in getting a prosthesis, either an artificial arm or leg or foot made at the center. So those were the activities: the physical therapy, the prosthetics and just a small surgery room, because we only had one orthopedic surgeon during my time there.

CARBONE: Mm-hm.

BARTON: So it was a smaller facility, but, you know, serving, over time, hundreds of patients a year,—

CARBONE: Yeah. I don't know to what extent this—

BARTON: —because patients would come in and out as—as they were progressing.

CARBONE: Yeah. Was there a typical patient, if that generalization can even be made?

BARTON: No. No, no, no. They ranged in age from very, very small, between one and five, children, to grandparents in their 70s and 80s.

CARBONE: Mm-hm. And most had been injured by mines, bombings—

BARTON: Most were civilians, had not been involved in active fighting. We didn't allow guns either at the place where we lived, or we didn't allow guns in the rehab center. And they were civilians that had been somehow caught in a crossfire or stepped on a mine or been hit by a bomb.

CARBONE: Yeah. Was there—

BARTON: And all of this was happening in the countryside very nearby.

CARBONE: Did the staff of the—

BARTON: I'm sorry.

CARBONE: No I—. Did the staff of the rehab center interact with American forces or Vietnamese forces in any way?

BARTON: Yes, we did. I mean, the [chuckles]—there was a province chief, which was a representative of the South Vietnamese government, in Quảng Ngãi town. There was an American military adviser to that province chief in the town. And we would relate to them. That was one of my responsibilities, was to relate to them in terms of, "Okay, we're not getting our supplies. We have to get our supplies. We know you may not like [chuckles]—like our presence here, but we're here."

CARBONE: Mm-hm.

BARTON: "We have permission from not only our own government but from the South Vietnamese government to operate here, and we'd like you to help us facilitate the transport of these supplies." They seemed to be held up in Saigon or held at the airport or that type of thing. We had a very different presence. I mean, we had no—let's say other than that sort of—I would almost call it sort of a diplomatic contact with the South Vietnamese government and our own government representatives there. We really didn't—and I didn't feel like relations were—well, there was some tension, I guess, with our presence there because they knew we were reporting on the impact of the war.

CARBONE: Mm-hm.

BARTON: But, you know, some—some relationship. When I talk about the political prisoner issue, I'll get into another issue, which is [chuckles] a little trickier, but—anyway, that's—I think, answers your question.

BARTON: Yeah, certainly.

So the—this rehab facility provided surgery, physical therapy, prosthetics but then also social assistance to the Vietnamese civilians. Can you talk more about the services provided?

BARTON: Yes. Well, one thing that we noticed when we arrived, my wife and I—when we arrived there, we noticed that there wasn't much follow-up on the patients, which was understandable because it was, like, "Okay, we're—we're limited. We don't have that many—on our foreign team there, we don't have that many. We're training Vietnamese, and we're providing these services: the prosthetics, the physical therapy and the surgery. And we just hope that the Vietnamese will be able, when they leave, will be able to take care of themselves."

But we realized that for some of them, with an artificial arm or a leg or whatever, we're going to be—they would be given a small amount of money when they left, but not much sort of follow-up or social assistance. We realized that, and particularly my wife got involved, but we both got involved in trying to set up some sort of funding that would give those individuals some sort of training or some sort of small amount of funding to get them started on some sort of home project if they weren't able to assume their work in the rice fields.

Most of them were farmers, men and women. We did develop, actually—one of the Vietnamese prosthetists developed a—an artificial limb which could be used in the rice paddies. It was a bamboo—sort of a peg leg? You know the way pirates have peg legs?

CARBONE: [Chuckles.] Yes.

BARTON: Sort of a peg leg but slatted so that it could be used in the rice fields. So some rice farmers—you know, if they'd hit a mine and lost a leg below the knew—could strap that on and go right back to rice farming.

CARBONE: Wow.

BARTON: So those, we weren't concerned about. We were concerned about some that had more serious injuries, perhaps had lost both legs or something like that. What were they going to do when they went back? So a small—some sort of social interviews were done before leaving the rehab center to say, "Okay, what might you be able to do? Weave mats or something like that. Here's some funding, and we'll come

visit you with some of the materials in a couple of weeks," that—that kind of thing. So it was definitely sort of small—small business enterprises that some patients could do.

And that was—that was begun, and, you know, to some extent successful but difficult because some of those patients had to go back to a refugee situation, and there, it's very difficult, very difficult to—to know whether or not they could be successful with a small business enterprise there.

CARBONE: Mm-hm. Was there—I mean, these various civilians living in a war-torn country, but was there social support from families and from communities of these people who had, like, been—who had had amputations, or were they going back in kind of—without any means?

BARTON: Some support, yes. The main [chuckles]—the main—what we realized was—I mean, definitely with the kinds of injuries that were coming into the rehab center, there was some stigma attached, according to Vietnamese culture, which, you know, isn't that much different than any culture. Most cultures see somebody who's lost a limb as complete disabled; they're not going to be able to do anything.

So one of our—one thing that we emphasized in the physical therapy was trying to make sure that every patient that went through the rehab center was able to do as much physical activity as possible before leaving—in other words, able to walk, able to manipulate the artificial arm, being able to feed themselves, being able to dress themselves, being able to do as much physical activity as possible so that when they went back to their village and family, they could convince the village and family, "Oh, I can take care of myself. I can do this." And then they would be given some—you know, some—some responsibilities.

We also tried to involve certain patients in working at the center. There again, that was a whole training effort to move Vietnamese into the physical therapy, the prosthetics and the management of the center, itself, so that that would be entirely Vietnamese telling patients that had been injured, "You can do it because *we* did it."

And so some patients were hired by us. We hired a woman patient who had actually lost one limb above the knee and one limb below the knee. She ended up being our sort of receptionist/manager of the center. She would interview patients when they arrived, do a full report on their injury and their background, and she became kind of our resident manager. And just so you know, she [chuckles]—she reunited with her husband, who had actually—was a member of the North Vietnamese Army—reunited after the war with him. Had a child by him, and that daughter has now had a grandchild. And that woman who lost both her leg—above the knee and below the knee—came to the United States three years ago and visited. Visited me.

CARBONE: Wow.

BARTON: And visited my wife.

CARBONE: That's amazing.

BARTON: My former wife, but visited us here in the United States with her daughter. An amazing story, just amazing. But having someone like that, who—in other words, if she's interviewing patients as they're leaving, and the patients are saying, "Oh, I don't know what I'm going to do," she would roll her—they're called quần's in Vietnamese—you know the black trousers. She would roll up her black trousers and show them: "Look, I'm working—I'm working here at the center."

CARBONE: [Chuckles.]

BARTON: "I don't have two legs here, but I'm working hard here at the center." And that would immediately shut up the patient that's complaining, "I don't know what I'm gonna do when I go home." So, again, having the Vietnamese doing that kind of work gets away from, "Okay, this is the Quaker or the American or the foreigner telling us that we can do it. But we're going to be shamed when we go back to our village."

So undoubtedly, they were—it was hard for patients, but we've had pretty good feedback since, that, you know, a lot of the former patients are—are—are doing okay. A lot of that rehab work is being done now by the government, and the government centers are—continue to provide—you know, a

young child has to have a new prosthesis made every—every year or two.

CARBONE: Yeah.

BARTON: So a lot of those patients are coming back. Some of the same prosthetists have been working at the center since—you know, since we were there. They've been working—you know, they were young prosthetists then, probably 30, but now they're in their 70s or 80s, and they're still working.

CARBONE: Mm-hm.

BARTON: And they've trained other people to take over, so the effort has endured. It hasn't just sort of ended as a: "Oh, that was a nice—nice Quaker effort"—[chuckles]—"at the end of the war." It's continued.

CARBONE: Can you—

BARTON: That's a nice feeling to have.

CARBONE: Yeah. No, that's wonderful.

Can you tell me more about the Vietnamese staff of the center?

BARTON: Well, many of the staff, either prosthetists or physical therapists, were former patients, themselves. Some had had some, let's say high school equivalent education, showed an interest in either the physical therapy or the prosthetics, and then were just, you know, sort of interviewed and hired.

CARBONE: And then trained—

BARTON: Some of the staff—yeah, trained. And then some of the staff, not all, by any means, but just a few lived in this compound, a small compound where the foreign staff lived. And, you know, that was—that was helpful to us because—just in terms of, "Okay, how do we find the following item?" You know, "Is it possible to go into the market late at night, or are we going to get shot?" [Chuckles.]

CARBONE: Mm-hm.

BARTON: "Can we go to this village with this patient? Is it safe?"—that kind of thing.

CARBONE: Yeah. Did you have much interaction with the civilians and the people in the surrounding areas of Vietnam?

BARTON: Well, when we would take a patient back—yeah, when we would take a patient back to a village, of course the villagers were very interested, particularly, you know, a funny-looking American bringing a patient back. They would be curious as to what—what the American could say in Vietnamese, what the situation was with the patient, that type of thing. But we always—we always saw that as an opportunity, an opportunity to just say, "You know, we're different. We're here to assist the civilians that had been injured in the war, and, as representatives of a Quaker organization, we oppose the war." And for the most part, the Vietnamese understood that and seemed to accept that we were a different type of presence there.

CARBONE: Mm-hm. Was there—

BARTON: And that really—that really protected us because there were a few times when we were, you know, caught in crossfires or came pretty close to some war activity. [Chuckles.]

CARBONE: Yeah, but just that you were non-American forces who were opposing American military—

BARTON: We were not—yeah. And so we would be warned, usually. "There's firefights up ahead. Don't go there" or "Don't stay in the village too late because it's going to change hands from the South Vietnamese government to the revolutionary side at about five o'clock in the afternoon, so it's better if you leave at four thirty." {Both chuckle.] That kind of thing.

CARBONE: Wow. Were the—

BARTON: And the province—I mean, mind you, the province was never controlled by the South Vietnamese government.

CARBONE: Okay.

BARTON: This is a province in the middle of Vietnam. There was a big Army base, Chu Lai Army Base, near the center. Every once in a while, we would see soldiers from the army base at the market in Quảng Ngãi. Most of the American military were kept within the base, never allowed to go out in the civilian population. Any Americans we met were always surprised. They would say, "Oh, well, how—how are you surviving? You don't mean to tell me that you live on the economy." I said, "What do you mean, 'on the economy'?" They said, "Well, you don't buy things at the Vietnamese market, do you?" [Chuckles.] I said, "Yes, we certainly do."

CARBONE: [Laughs.]

BARTON: So I guess in their terms, we lived on the Vietnamese economy. In other words, we were—we lived in the town. We lived—not necessarily Vietnamese, because we had a fairly nice compound. In other words, we had, you know, single rooms; we weren't living with five or six people in the same room, but we lived in the town, we shopped in the marketplace, we traveled to the villages. But literally a mile, a half mile out of the town of Quảng Ngãi, most of that territory was controlled by whatever you want to call it: the other side, the revolutionary forces, the Viet Cong or whatever. That was the nature of the province.

CARBONE: Yeah. What was the perception of the U.S. military by—of your—like, your patients held that the people that you worked with? [sic]

BARTON: I never—I never experienced anger or hatred towards the American military from any civilians that might actually have been injured by either a U.S. mine or a U.S. bombing or shot up by American soldiers. They—I don't know what it was. I mean, you could call it North Vietnamese propaganda. You could call it revolutionary side propaganda. You could call it North Vietnamese or revolutionary side education. But even patients that had been shot up by American soldiers seemed to understand that the American soldiers weren't too blame,—

CARBONE: Yeah.

BARTON: —that it was American policy. It was American—the American government. It was political leaders that were sending the soldiers and the soldiers didn't know what they were doing. And so—I mean, of course they were—some patients were devastated by their injuries, and they would—the most anger or bitterness toward American soldiers that they would express would just be to say, "[Vietnamese phrase.]," which just means the American soldiers don't know what they're doing at all—

CARBONE: Yeah.

BARTON: —and that they'd been misled to participate in the war.

CARBONE: Mm-hm.

BARTON: The way that American soldiers were separated from the Vietnamese population explains a lot about a lot of the tragic incidents that occurred. They had no idea who the enemy was and where the enemy were. It's just very tragic.

I mean, a funny but—a funny but tragic story, I'll tell you: Sometimes American soldiers would go into the marketplace. The Vietnamese told me that little—small Vietnamese kids would teach the American soldiers how to count in Vietnamese, and they would teach them, "[Sounds like] "*Lật đổ đế quốc Mỹ*," which is five words in Vietnamese, but those five words don't mean, "One, two, three, four, five." Those five words mean, "Overthrow the American imperialists." [Laughter.] So these soldiers would then continue to shop in the marketplace and show off their recent knowledge of Vietnamese by saying, "*Lật đổ đế quốc mỹ*," "Overthrow the American imperialists." And it just—it illustrated—I mean, it wasn't—I mean, yes, it was to make fun of the American soldiers, but it illustrated that the Vietnamese understood that the American soldiers didn't know, really, what they were doing there.

CARBONE: Yeah. They drew—

BARTON: Funny story, but tragic in—in so many ways, to my—to my way of thinking because, you know, there I was in Quảng Ngãi, and probably in Chu Lai, which I understood only too well there might have been some classmates of mine from

Dartmouth. [Chuckles.] And, you know, I didn't meet any at my 50th reunion, but [chuckles], you know, I know that some of my classmates were—were in Vietnam, and some came back with very strong antiwar sentiments. Some may have been already interviewed by you or other people in the [Dartmouth] Vietnam Project, and some continued to support the war, and that's okay. I don't—I don't necessarily have a problem with that, but the tragedy was the separation of the soldiers from the Vietnamese population. That just meant that every time they went out, they were fearful of their lives, which was understandable. But in the meantime, what happened is that lots of Vietnamese civilians got injured or shot up or killed as a result.

CARBONE: Yeah. Yeah. No, that's a—certainly interesting the distinction that the Vietnamese drew between, like, the soldiers and the American government.

BARTON: Yeah.

CARBONE: It's two different—

BARTON: You know, if somebody had told me that before I spent two years mixing with the civilian population, I would have said, "Ahh, I don't know if I believe that." But I saw it, and I saw it in patients that had been injured by soldiers.

CARBONE: Yeah.

BARTON: And they—they were able to draw that distinction, which was just incredible, in my mind.

CARBONE: Mm-hm.

You mentioned earlier that you had been—there had been kind of cursory interaction with the South Vietnamese government. Was there—did your—did the rehab facility have any interaction with North Vietnamese leaders?

BARTON: No, no. I mean, we were in a province that was supposed to be controlled by the South Vietnamese government, but as I said, really only the main town was. There were attempts to, so to speak—as you know, the pacification program in Vietnam to pacify the countryside—well, pacifying the

countryside, just meant bombing it and moving the civilian population off of their—out of their villages and into refugee camps around the center of town. And that really didn't work to pacify the countryside because the revolutionary side was in the countryside at night,—

CARBONE: Yeah.

BARTON: —and moved back into the villages at night.

CARBONE: Yup.

BARTON: So the South Vietnamese government controlled a semblance of authority in the capital of the province, but in the countryside didn't control it, either. They'd moved the population off of the countryside, but—and as far as I knew, there were revolutionary government troops in the countryside but not too many North Vietnamese regulars in the countryside.

CARBONE: Uh-huh.

BARTON: But, again, if you studied the Vietnam War, studied Vietnam, you know that a tremendous mixture of North and South. I mean, Quảng Ngãi Province, where I was—there's a small village called Đức Phổ [Duc Pho], which is where the premier of North Vietnamese was born, the former premier of North Vietnamese was born. So a tremendous mix back and forth of North and South, so it wasn't—wasn't always clear.

CARBONE: Yeah. [Chuckles.]

So you've mentioned you were the director of this American Friends Service Committee rehab facility, but you also spent a significant amount of time kind of reporting on political prisoners and torture?

BARTON: Yeah.

CARBONE: So I was wondering if you could speak to that.

BARTON: Well, it's a horse-cart town. Quảng Ngãi is a horse-cart town, and as you went from our compound to the downtown area,

to the market, on the left was a huge facility, sort of a Quonset hut facility with steel roofs, surrounded by barbed wire, and we were told that was the prison or interrogation center.

CARBONE: Who was it run by?

BARTON: The South Vietnamese government. But down the street from our compound was an American facility called the Embassy House. The people at the Embassy House dressed in gray clothing. They were not American military. They were CIA [Central Intelligence Agency].

CARBONE: Yup.

BARTON: And they advised the interrogation center, and we would see them—we didn't communicate with them at all. We would see them going in their Jeeps from the American—from this Embassy House to the interrogation center. Okay, well, that's not positive for a few months we didn't, you know? At the hospital, we saw a couple of times patients that needed to be moved to our rehab center because they had injuries that we could assist with.

And a couple of times, it was older women—I would say women in their 70s, maybe even 80. And we would go to the hospital to get those individuals, and they were prisoners. They were chained to their beds.

CARBONE: Wow.

BARTON: And we would say, "What's going on here?" "We need to move that person to the rehab center." "What's happening?" "Oh, that person is from the interrogation center." We would say, "What?! Why are they chained to the bed?" "Oh, because they're a prisoner." And we would say, "Well, obviously, this woman is not a combatant. She's a civilian. What is she doing chained to her bed?" Then sometimes we would succeed in getting the prisoner—obviously, some of the ones that were the most injured and the most vulnerable and not very threatening in terms of a combatant, we would succeed in getting them moved to the rehab center.

CARBONE: Mm-hm.

BARTON: Once they were at the rehab center or even sometimes at the hospital, we would interview them, and either my Vietnamese or my wife's Vietnamese not quite good enough to do a thorough interview, so we would have someone translate, but we would also be able to hear the interview, and we would ask them where their injuries came from. Sometimes they would come from a mine or a—you know, a bullet injury or a bomb injury, but some of the patients were saying that they had been tortured.

CARBONE: Mm-hm.

BARTON: Nasty torture: electric devices attached to various parts of their body, and tortured. Some of those patients also related to us that there were Americans present when they were tortured. And that obviously shocked us, surprised us, and at first we didn't believe it, but then we began seeing enough patients from the interrogation center who had in fact been tortured and who were exhibiting physical signs of being tortured, and the evidence began to mount, to the point where we took pictures of the patients. We relayed some of the patients' stories about the fact that they were civilians; they were non-combatants. They had been questioned extensively with an American in the room. They'd been tortured with an American present.

So we documented those stories with photographs of some of the patients and relayed those back to the American Friends Service Committee, and those stories began to mount up with—I don't know if you're familiar with the tiger cages, that was the information about political prisoners coming out of Saigon?

CARBONE: Mm-hm.

BARTON: But that was about political prisoners that were being held in tiger cages and tortured with lye thrown into the tiger cages, and then they were also tortured. So our information and the information about what was happening in Saigon with political prisoners, information about, broadly speaking, I suppose the Phoenix program [a part of CORDS]. That was all about taking people away from their villages and drying up the support for the revolutionary forces in the villages by

accusing almost anyone of being a political support for the revolutionary forces. Began to mount up. That information began to mount up, and the documentation of the torturing and the political prisoner issue became a very big issue back here in the States and actually world wide within Amnesty International, another organization.

But we documented those cases very, very carefully, and actually we were asked to testify before Congress when we came back and testified before Lee [H.] Hamilton's subcommittee in Congress about that political prisoner information. And, you know, was fairly, I guess—fairly volatile information about what was going on.

CARBONE: Going back to when you were in Vietnam and kind of realizing what was happening at this prison, you said that you never had any contact with these American CIA agents.

BARTON: Right.

CARBONE: I was wondering if you could just tell me more about these political prisoners and these patients of yours that were coming to the rehab facility.

BARTON: Well, what do you mean?

CARBONE: Well, you mentioned that they were older women, and I was able to find a couple—a report that you and your then-wife had written that's included in a book about foreign policy in Indochina, but it also mentioned that there were, like, children, I believe? So were all of these patients, like, noncombatants?

BARTON: Well, as far as we knew, most of them were noncombatants. I mean, I don't know any—you've actually seen a picture of this older woman, but, now, were they partisans of the revolutionary side? Did they support the revolutionary side? I would say most of the population of Quảng Ngãi Province supported the revolutionary side, but the overwhelming proportion of the population simply wanted to get back to their villages and farm. Their number one concern was to live a peaceful life back in their village and do their rice farming. That's what most of the Vietnamese civilian population in Quảng Ngãi, from my experience of only two

years there but pretty extensive experience there, told me that they—they just wanted to get back to their farms.

Would they—would they support the revolutionary side forces when they came into their villages at night and promise to protect that village so that those people wouldn't be moved out of their village into a refugee camp? Probably. But is that reason to hold them as political prisoners and torture them? Not in my view.

Now, was that 70-year-old woman who had been tortured—was she of that partisan variety? Perhaps. But if you call that—I mean, she's not a combatant. She's not fighting for the revolutionary forces. And other than the revolutionary forces controlling most of the province, what information is she going to provide to you [chuckles] that allows you to make any progress on convincing almost the entire population of Quảng Ngãi Province that the revolutionary side is wrong? I mean, it's just not—not in the cards.

There were younger—younger men and women that had been tortured, and maybe teenagers, at the—at the facility, and it just seemed that it was—well, one, that torture under any circumstance is not to be allowed, not something that I agree to personally, not something I feel my government should sanction in any way, shape or form and not something which should be done, at a very human level. So combatant or noncombatant, the torture shouldn't have been conducted.

Then you talk about the idea of taking any civilian into a prison and torturing them for information about—that could be valuable, of military nature. It just—to think that you're going to get valid information under torture is—I just don't think is—is a smart—smart way to go, or a [unintelligible] way to go.

CARBONE: Yeah. Of the—how many people, approximately, would you say were brought to the facility who had been tortured?

BARTON: We had, I would just several handfuls, maybe over the two-year period of time that we were there, a couple—a couple of dozen. I don't know. I haven't—I haven't really thought about it. I don't—I don't want to put a particular number on it,

but I would say a couple of dozen. I mean, we're not talking hundreds here; we're talking handfuls of people that for some reason were transferred to the hospital, perhaps because they thought those individuals were going to die, perhaps because some Vietnamese prison guard felt sorry for the older woman and transferred her to the hospital hoping that she could be helped from dying.

CARBONE: Mm-hm. And so you were relaying

BARTON: It was—it was—it was a number of people, the number that came to the hospital and then came to our rehab facility. The numbers of people kept at the interrogation center *were* in the hundreds—

CARBONE: Yeah.

BARTON: —because they were huge—huge compounds.

CARBONE: Were the people that you treated—did they then return to that center, or would they be returned to their villages?

BARTON: Ooh. I don't—I don't remember, really.

CARBONE: Mm-hm.

BARTON: I think probably both. Some might have been released. We might have requested the release of some and been granted, and some might have had to go back to the interrogation center.

CARBONE: Mm-hm. And you were relaying information to the American Friends Service Committee this entire time. Did you have any idea of, you know, what that information was being used or kind of where that information was reaching?

BARTON: As they had with most of the statistics that we released on civilian casualties, most of the things we wrote about the impact of the war on the civilian population—we knew that they would publicize those as they could. In other words, within—I don't know how much you know about the American Friends Service Committee, but, I mean, they have some outreach beyond just Quaker communities but not—not a great deal.

CARBONE: Mm-hm.

BARTON: But the political prisoner issue began to get more media attention after a certain—after a certain amount of time, so there were some more journalistic articles about what was happening.

CARBONE: Yeah. And by the time—like, towards the end of your two-years in Quảng Ngãi, were you thinking that you would return to the United States and continue to be active in this issue?

BARTON: Not particularly. I was hoping to come back and have the war be over and hoping to resume my career [chuckles] interest in foreign policy and international affairs. But when we came back, the war was not over, and—well, one, there was a more sophisticated effort to end the war, by the peace movement, not as—demonstrations weren't potentially going to be as big, but the organization of an effort to stop the funding of the war had geared up and was becoming effective, so the efforts in Congress to stop the funding for the war was getting—gaining—gaining momentum. And that was a more specific movement, not with public demonstrations but focused on congressional districts, pressuring members of Congress to end the funding for the war and that type of thing, so that was obvious, coming back.

And then the American Friends Service Committee wanted us to travel around to basically, you know, a lot of Quaker meetings but do some speaking, and then, on the political prisoner issue, Amnesty International invited us to do some speaking, both in the United States and in Europe.

CARBONE: Mm-hm. And so when did you actually return from Vietnam and leave the rehab facility?

BARTON: Seventy-three.

CARBONE: Seventy-three?

BARTON: You're going to ask me the month now. [Chuckles.] I have no idea. [Laughter.] I think it was—I mean, we were there for

two years, from—a little over two years, so I think from early ’71, I want to say maybe February, March ’71 till May of ’73, but I don’t—I don’t really—I mean, I could find that out for you if it’s important, but It was for two years, maybe to ‘73.

CARBONE: And was this two years in that you had scheduled to leave—be in Vietnam for two years, or were you guys leaving as the war, you know, began to—kind of the United States began to reduce its presence there and move towards ending?

BARTON: We had signed up for a two-year assignment, and we were of course absolutely exhausted and fatigued after two years, but we’d also accomplished one of the purposes of our assignment, which was to reduce the foreign staff there, so the staff had gone, I think I said, you know from maybe 15 or more to, ooh, six or seven individuals. We were going to be replaced. There were some new directors that were coming into country, and that was—you know, that was sort of the reason. The reason was—I mean, there were so many patients flowing into the rehab center—the war was still going on pretty actively in ’73, so it wasn’t—it wasn’t as though things had reduced anyway.

I’m going to have to stop here for a second, but I can come right back, or you can call right back in a couple of minutes?

CARBONE: Yeah, certainly.

I was also going to mention we—Dartmouth kind of does three-hour—the Dartmouth Vietnam Project does three-hour segments, but if it seems like we might not be able to get through everything in this time, I could certainly call back at another day that works for you and we could finish recording your experiences.

BARTON: Okay. Well, you can either—my wife’s still recovering from surgery, so I just need to check in with her for—it’ll probably take only a minute or two, so you could just hold on—

CARBONE: Ok. Yeah that sounds great.

BARTON: —or I could—do you want to just do that?

CARBONE: Yeah. Certainly.

BARTON: Okay. I'll be back in just a second. Okay, bye.

CARBONE: See you la- —

[Recording interruption.]

BARTON: Okay.

CARBONE: Are you all good?

BARTON: Yeah, yeah, fine. Everything's fine. Just needed to check with her.

CARBONE: Okay.

So I think before that, we were talking about just the end of your time in Vietnam in 1973 and then returning to the United States and then speaking on behalf of the American Friends Service Committee and Amnesty International.

BARTON: Right. And that just involved a lot of—a lot of travel, a lot of speaking, speaking about the experience in Quảng Ngãi, the impact of the war on the civilian population; yes, the political prisoner issue. That was particularly—Amnesty interested in that. And then, you know, just—just working, I suppose you would say, broadly in the peace movement, trying to end the war, end the funding of the war.

And so really for the next two years, until '75, when the war really ended, traveling and speaking. [Chuckles.] And so involved lots of sacrifices by both of us in terms of travel and speaking and—and postponing careers. But the ultimate result was the final cutting off of funding for the war, which succeeded and put enough pressure on our own government to end the war.

And the results were slow in coming, as we heard from Vietnamese friends, that there was—is still after the peace agreement there were bombings in Quảng Ngãi, after the peace agreement, but not for—not for too long, anyway. So change of government in the south and in Quảng Ngãi, and

without much fighting in the northern provinces, including Quảng Ngãi—I mean, change of government came quickly and swiftly without much fighting. It really did in Saigon as well.

And so I guess all of that over ten years, from Dartmouth until the peace agreement signed, and my wife and I started a family [chuckles] in '76, and resumed a career in foreign policy here in Washington shortly thereafter and continued to work in foreign policy and national security issues since.

CARBONE: And you mentioned that you testified before the House Foreign Affairs Committee, and was this with—were you working with Chairman Lee [H.] Hamilton?

BARTON: No, I testified before his subcommittee.

CARBONE: Okay. Can you tell me more about that?

BARTON: Well, when I was [chuckles]—long story. You—you open up a lot of chapters in my life. During my graduate work at Johns Hopkins, I had worked during holiday periods of time as a contract interpreter for the State Department [U.S. Department of State]. As I already relayed to you, I majored in French at Dartmouth. My French was fluent. So when I was at graduate school, I needed to earn some more money, so during vacation times I worked as a contract interpreter for the State Department. I would take foreign visitors—I would accompany them around the United States. Let's say—well, one of the people I took around was a high-ranking official from Togo, who spoke French and didn't speak any English, so I would travel with that individual and do simultaneous translation for the individual during a 20- or 30-day period of time while they were visiting the United States.

One of the people that I translated for was a French deputy from the French National Assembly, and he came over to the United States to visit Congressman Hamilton. He stayed with Congressman Hamilton at Congressman Hamilton's house, and then he would visit Congressman Hamilton at work. He did that for probably a week's period of time. And I was to translate for him.

And I would have to meet him first thing in the morning and be with him until [chuckles]—until he went to bed at Congressman Hamilton's house because Congressman Hamilton didn't speak any French, and neither did any members of his family.

CARBONE: [Chuckles.]

BARTON: So I got to know Congressman Hamilton then, when I did that translation. I probably let congressman Hamilton know that I was in Vietnam. I might have sent him an article or two about the political prisoner issue while I was in Vietnam. And so when I started doing lots of speaking, coming back, he invited me to testify before his subcommittee, and he entered that testimony in the Congressional Record, outlining the political prisoner issue and focusing on—on the American involvement in some of the interrogation center activities (torture).

CARBONE: And it was you and your wife at the time who were both testifying?

BARTON: Well, I'm trying to remember now whether we actually testified or whether we submitted testimony. And if you ask me right now, I wouldn't be able to say for sure. And I probably have that testimony somewhere. But I don't—I mean, if you need that, I could provide it, but I don't know—I don't even remember the date. [Chuckles.]

CARBONE: Yeah. [Chuckles.] And was the information that you were sharing with the House similar to the information that you would be presenting on kind of this speaking tour that you did?

BARTON: Yes.

CARBONE: And so I was wondering if you could just tell me a little bit more about the reception that you got, both in the House and in the United States when you were talking about the torture that had occurred and been perpetrated by Americans.

BARTON: Yeah. Well, I think they—I mean, the political prisoner issue was—was simply a sort of a, let's say, one more defining issue related to the war. It wasn't *the* defining issue. I think it

was one of, ooh, a dozen or two dozen issues related to the war: the war's impact on the civilian population, the war's reasoning—did you take a course in—on Vietnam, or have you—

CARBONE: Ah, I've done research for this project, but I have not taken a class at Dartmouth.

BARTON: I mean, the opponents to the war—let's say the peace movement, broadly speaking—opposed the war on a number of counts. Policy wise, that the policy of containing China, containing communism, containing national wars of liberation, that those policies were totally off the mark. And I could go into that if you want me to, but I won't. But, I mean, the peace movement sort of attacked the war on those grounds. The peace movement attacked the war on the grounds that you're sending American soldiers to fight a war that the South Vietnamese Army doesn't want to fight, itself. You're sending Americans over there, and they don't know what they're doing, American soldiers. You're bombing and using—oh!—munitions that maim and hurt the civilian population.

CARBONE: Mm-hm.

BARTON: So the political prisoner was just yet another issue connected to the Phoenix Program and the idea that, oh, well, you just take the civilian population out of the villages and group them in refugee camps, then you destroy the enemy, and then you could return the villagers. Well, it wasn't succeeding, so I think the political prisoner issue was just another one of the many defining issues of the war, but convinced additional people to become active in opposing the war and opposing funding for the war, and so it was important in terms of generating enough activity to get enough people active and involved that politicians would be convinced that the war was unsustainable and was off the mark in policy terms and in reality terms, and that members of Congress would eventually stop the funding, which they did. The idea was to simply persist and keep speaking about the inadvisability of this war to the general population until the war could be stopped. Which it was, eventually.

CARBONE: Yeah. You had—so you had left the United States in 1971, returned in 1973. Did you see a shift in kind of the American public or, like, the national mood regarding Vietnam when you returned?

BARTON: Well, there weren't the mass demonstrations that there were in '68, '69. I think the—as I indicated with the peace movement, the peace movement had decided to focus more specifically on funding of the war, feeling that just on the sort of policy basis, of opposing the war because it's a war in Vietnam, was not going to succeed, that it had to be a specific strategy of focusing on the funding, and once the funding was cut, at the highest political levels the decision would be made to come to some sort of an agreement to withdraw. And that succeeded.

My sense of the public is that it was—it was hard. In other words, there wasn't overwhelming popular activism against the war. The general population was tired of hearing about the war, was fatigued, as most people were, with the war, and that the majority of Americans had been convinced by, you know, gee, American vets coming back and opposing the war, by people like Senator [John F.] Kerry coming back and opposing the war and speaking against the war, a highly decorated American veteran, and other veterans coming back and opposing the war. I think the majority of the American population were opposing the war and to some extent were fatigued, were suffering from hearing enough about the war.

CARBONE: Yeah.

BARTON: Our information about the impact on the civilian population was still of interest to many, many people. But, again, we were circulating in Amnesty circles and Quaker circles, which are not large in terms of a public audience. [Chuckles.]

CARBONE: Yeah.

BARTON: But those circles were also important, I think, in terms of pressure points in the political process to end the funding for the war.

CARBONE: Mm-hm.

BARTON: In other words, the people that were persistent and dogged and knew that they were going to see this through to the end of the war stayed active, but that was not the majority of the American population. The majority of the American population opposed the war but were not, let's say, activists against the war. The activists against the war were a more limited number—I wouldn't be able to say how many—but I think were able, with the organization that was in Washington, D.C., opposing the war—were able to put pressure on enough members of Congress to actually end the funding for the war and to signal the administration that you were going to have to reach a peace agreement if you wanted to save any face in terms of the government being able to get out of Vietnam with some semblance of not just having the funding for American soldiers be cut off.

But I think the opinion was strong enough between '71, and by '73, that—at first the argument to cut off the funding was a tough one because, of course, people didn't want to cut off funding for the troops. I didn't, either. It was, like, I didn't want to leave my Dartmouth classmates who may be in the base at Chu Lai—I don't want to leave them without any food and funding [chuckles]. On the other hand, I don't want them to continue to prosecute the war.

But I said initially I think people were convinced, the only way this is going to end is through threaten to cut off the funding and to actually have some votes that—that do that. And that's what happened. And that's why the war was eventually ended.

CARBONE: Yeah.

BARTON: And my personal view has nothing to do with a Mr. [Henry A.] Kissinger or anybody else deciding that they would make peace with the Vietnamese. That's, in my view, nonsense. You know, what was key was the pressure from the peace movement to cut off the funding convince them that they had to do something.

CARBONE: Yeah. Great.

And so after—you know, your career since the 1970s, you've worked with Congress, you worked at the State Department, you were involved in the House-Senate Joint Inquiry into 9/11 [the 9/11/2001, attacks], and so you've been—you've worked in government, with government, about government since then. And I was just wondering if you could talk maybe about how your career and things that you have done—if—how and if they've been influenced by the time that you've spent in Vietnam and really into, like, the peace—peace movement.

BARTON: Well, that's a big question. [Chuckles.]

CARBONE: [Chuckles.]

BARTON: Did you work hard on these questions? [Laughs.] You've done a good job.

Well, there was a lot about the Viet- —Vietnam experience. I guess my tremendous respect for the Vietnamese people, my feelings about war and its impact on a civilian population. There are lots of my reactions that I think sort of stay compartmentalized into that ten-year period of my life that was my Vietnam experience, and there's not too much of that that is applicable to my career since, working on the Hill [Capitol Hill], working at the State Department, doing the Joint Inquiry, doing the legislation to reform the intelligence community and then, now, teaching about all of that.

There's not much of that that transfers, although I would say there are some big [chuckles]—some very large—I don't know whether you would call them topics or issues or perspectives that do translate. I mean, one is I guess a very firm belief in the democratic process and a very adamant belief that persistence and perseverance and trying to support views that you feel are appropriate and honest views and that being persistent and pursuing those through the democratic process can be effective and successful.

I had that reconfirmed, I think, in the 9/11 process, which for me was an investigation of one year with the joint House and Senate Intelligence Committees [House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence; Senate Select Committee on

Intelligence] and then the intelligence reform legislation, which was a three-year process,

CARBONE: 2004.

BARTON: —and then a couple of years looking at the FBI's [Federal Bureau of Investigation's] intelligence products, and then teaching about 9/11 since for eight years—that democratic process was underlined again as an effective process through all of that. And it wasn't the either peace movement individuals or the Vietnamese people that kept me focused on the persistence of the democratic process. But it was the families of victims of 9/11 individuals that kept me focused on that process and helped me be persistent through the 9/11 process, which, as the Vietnam process was, was exhausting.

I mean, the Vietnam experience was an exhausting one, and the 9/11 experience was another exhausting one in my life, and that's why my family keeps telling me to stop teaching about this. [Both chuckle.] But it has reaffirmed my belief that sometimes democracy is very frustrating and is a very difficult process to continue to believe in and to be persistent at, but sometimes the results can be positive and somewhat rewarding.

The war was stopped. The Vietnamese have—now we have normal relations with Vietnam. I think Vietnam—the commercialism of the Vietnamese people has overridden the tough, somewhat doctrinaire communist government there, and the Vietnamese people are thriving, for the most part, despite a fairly doctrinaire government.

And in terms of 9/11, I think that many of the reforms that have been instituted in the intelligence community are working and are keeping our country safer, and I continue to hope that more reforms will be implemented and continue to work in that process.

I just met the other day with one of my classmates, who happens to be a senator from Maine, [Angus S.] "Gus" King [Jr., Class of 1966]. He was interested in my views on intelligence reform because he works for the intelligence communit-—committee with the Senate, and I continue to

hope and believe that some of the reforms that haven't yet been implemented will be implemented in the future to make our intelligence community more fleet of foot and better at preventing terrorist attacks.

So some of those big, general perspectives, like the importance of a democratic process, my belief in the democratic process—those have sort of—have transferred from the Vietnam experience. But some of the particulars of living in Vietnam, being with Vietnamese people day in, day out and developing a huge respect for them as a people and their resilience and their energy and their positive nature—is that transferable to today? Not—not so much. But is the experience with persisting, so to speak, in the peace movement and, you know, succeeding in stopping the war—that has been transferable to the 9/11 experience, for me personally, anyway.

CARBONE: Yeah. Wonderful. Thank you very much.

BARTON: Sure.

CARBONE: I think—I don't have any more questions for you.

BARTON: [Chuckles.] Okay.

CARBONE: If there's anything you—you feel that I didn't give adequate attention to or something that you would love to add, I'd love to hear it, but—

BARTON: Well, one, I mean, I want to make sure to compliment you—I mean, these have been excellent questions, and I'm glad that this Vietnam project is ongoing. As I mentioned to you, I was very influenced by the death of [William S.] "Bill" Smoyer [Class of 1967] and very influenced by the military experience of many of my classmates in Vietnam, some of whom, I think probably to this day, continue to support their participation in the war, some that felt they were very disillusioned with what the war was supposed to accomplish and came back opposing the war.

The experience of all of us was terribly important as an American experience, and I hope that—at least it did for me, as I made those final comments about the democratic

process—it reaffirmed to me that it's okay to have opposing views or it's okay to have opposing experience in a democratic system, but that somehow the majority view must prevail, and hopefully somehow insights into the correctness of a certain policy, or the misadventure of a certain policy must come to light, and hopefully the freedom of the press can bring some of that to light, and the democratic process with demonstrations or political protests can also bring that to light.

So that's sort of where I come out in terms of expressing my life experience so far. [Both chuckle.] And you've—you've tired me out with some of your questions [both chuckle], but they've been good ones.

CARBONE: I'm glad to hear that. Thank you.

BARTON: Okay.

CARBONE: Thank you so much. This was really a fascinating interview, and this is stuff I'm really interested in. It's really great to hear all the—all the things you've done, all the things you've seen, heard and said.

[End of interview.]