

Primary Source: Billy Barnes on Fighting Poverty ^[1]

Billy Ebert Barnes (1931-2018) was a NC-native photographer and photojournalist known for his documentary work on racial and economic justice issues in the 1950s and 1960s. Barnes grew interested in issues of inequality while working as a photographer for McGraw-Hill Publishing during the 1950s and early 1960s. In 1963, Barnes was offered a job with the newly formed North Carolina Fund. In a 2003 interview with the Southern Oral History Program ^[2], Barnes talked about his involvement with the North Carolina Fund and how he tried to use photography to change perceptions of poverty. Excerpts of Barnes' interview are below. The complete interview ^[3] is available on the Southern Oral History Program's database ^[4].

Breaking the cycle of poverty

In this excerpt ^[5], Barnes discusses the ideology ^[6] of the North Carolina Fund. Because Governor Terry Sanford envisioned the North Carolina Fund as a way to break the cycle of poverty, the fund was focused on providing impoverished people with opportunities and the skills necessary to help themselves, rather than on offering welfare. As Barnes explains, this emphasis required a special focus on children.

Using photography

In this excerpt ^[7], Barnes discusses why he decided to use photography to promote the work of the North Carolina Fund. He explains that photography helped to humanize statistics about impoverished people. His photographs were widely used by the media during the War on Poverty.

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McDougal Terrace, Durham. 1968 Clean-Up Campaign

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Southern Oral History Program interviews with Billy Ebert Barnes:

[October 7, 2003 Interview](#) [20]

[October 12, 2003 Interview](#) [21]

[November 6, 2003 Interview](#) [3]

[March 10, 2016 Interview](#) [22]

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3 January 2018

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