

Bonded by the heritage of World War II and the electronic media and profoundly shaped and divided in freedom rides, the Peace Corps, the women's movement, and the Vietnam War, the 60 million Americans who came of age in the 1960s are healing their divisions through research and remembrance. This work is vital, since they are the leaders of our country's institutions in the decades of the year 2000—they are The Century Generation.

THE CENTURY GENERATION

A monthly report on how we are strengthening our future with our past through leadership, research, remembrance, and healing.

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Many of us have a certain reluctance to discuss how we remember the events of the 60s and 70s, and how those events might be shaping us as individuals now, in the present. But side by side with the reluctance is a sense that these questions are important, and that thinking about them is something that is important to do.

An example of this dual feeling is reflected in a note I got recently from a woman who is a successful journalist, and also a poet. She writes:

"The compartmentalization after the Vietnam war is obvious-- you're not supposed to talk about it, are you? I've tried to have conversations with good-- very good-- friends about it, guys whose number didn't come up, so they didn't go. With my best friend, I showed him the Century Generation and tried to get into some of the painful issues. He is a very open man, normally-- but not on this subject. He commented that, while the war was certainly a traumatic event, there were many sociological forces at work and it was far from the most important in creating the psyches and consciousnesses of our generation. It was infinitely revealing to me that this was one topic I couldn't get him to discuss."

A friend of mine who is a prizewinning broadcast journalist and also a Vietnam veteran, told me some days ago, "I want to talk about these things, but there's part of me that is reluctant to." I got a phone call last summer from a New York City venture capitalist who is a Vietnam veteran. He had read Century Generation material, and was excited about it. "I showed it to my wife and said, 'See? I'm not the only one. These things are important!'" I asked him if he would like to write about these matters. He said no, not yet. He is not ready to discuss them.

But the time for graceful efforts to help these discussions and bring them into the open is here. The dynamics of the Vietnam generation have become a first question on the national agenda. One reason is that quickly many in the generation are assuming positions of leadership in corporations and government. This heightens the importance of understanding the dynamics that may be underlying their thoughts, views, and actions. Another reason is that the Democratic Presidential nomination contest has moved the generational question to front center of the American political stage: by his strong direct appeal to the voters who are 45 years old and younger, Gary Hart is forcing us to ask, "What is going on in the Vietnam generation, and what do its members want?"

John Wheeler
Publisher

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BASIC LITERATURE-- WHAT SHAPES THE CENTURY GENERATION

The February, 1984 issue lists basic literature on the generation, in the areas of Cultural Changes in the Sixties, Civil Rights, and Women's Rights. This issue lists literature in two remaining key areas: the Vietnam War itself and sources that directly examine the Shaping Effects of Vietnam Era Events.

Later issues will address two other emerging kinds of sources: novels being written about the Vietnam era, and scholarship on the era.

These lists have been prepared by Kathleen Palm for The Century Generation.

VIETNAM WAR

Baker, Mark. NAM: The Vietnam War in the Words of the Men and Women Who Fought There. New York: Morrow, 1982. Includes the memoirs of one hundred servicemen and women who served in Vietnam, in oral history format.

Bourne, Peter G., M.D. MEN, STRESS AND VIETNAM. Boston, Massachusetts: Little Brown and Company, 1970. Valuable reading, especially for showing how predetermined one-year tours affected American soldiers.

Braestrup, Peter. BIG STORY: How the American Press and Television Reported and Interpreted the Crisis of Tet 1968 in Vietnam and Washington. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983. Thorough case history of media coverage.

Fitzgerald, Frances. FIRE IN THE LAKE: The Vietnamese and the Americans in Vietnam. Boston, Massachusetts: Little, Brown and Company, 1972. Examines the cultural differences between Americans and Vietnamese, and analyzes the United States effort in Vietnam.

Gelb, Leslie H. with Betts, Richard K. THE IRONY OF VIETNAM: The System Worked. Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution, 1979. An analytical history of United States policymaking in Vietnam. Key reading. Leslie Gelb headed the writing team for what became THE PENTAGON PAPERS (below), on American Vietnam involvement.

Karnow, Stanley. VIETNAM: A History. New York: Viking, 1983. A comprehensive history of the war, written with authority by a journalist who covered the American involvement from the beginning.

Kovic, Ron, BORN ON THE FOURTH OF JULY. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1976. An angry memoir by a Marine sergeant who became paralyzed in the war.

Lewy, Guenter. AMERICA IN VIETNAM. New York: Oxford University Press, 1978. Examines United States military policy in the war, and contains many useful official statistics.

Podhoretz, Norman. WHY WE WERE IN VIETNAM. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1982. Includes a forceful case for the morality of American involvement.

Santoli, Al. EVERYTHING WE HAD: An Oral History of the Vietnam War. New York: Random House, 1981. A history of the war, telling the stories of thirty-three American soldiers who fought in it.

U.S. Department of Defense. THE PENTAGON PAPERS. The New York Times edition. New York: Quadrangle, 1971. An abridged version of the official history of the war compiled by the Defense Department.

Comprehensive Lists: These sources provide thorough lists, with commentary:

Sugnet, Christopher and Hickey, John. VIETNAM WAR BIBLIOGRAPHY. New York: Lexington Books, 1983. Thorough. Good research tool.

Vietnam War Newsletter, published by Thomas Hebert, focusses on the war, its veterans, and the war's aftermath. The Newsletter has on hand a comprehensive bibliography on the Vietnam War. Box 122, Collinsville, Connecticut 06022.

The Wilson Quarterly, Summer 1983 issue. Editor Peter Braestrup assembled a valuable look at Vietnam as history, including an annotated bibliography.

SHAPING EFFECTS OF VIETNAM ERA EVENTS

Anglican Theological Review, Volume LXIV (January 1982). Special issue on the spiritual effects of the events of the Vietnam era on America.

Barone, Michael and Ujifusa, Grant. THE ALMANAC OF AMERICAN POLITICS. Washington, D.C.: The National Journal. This annual book presents a comprehensive overview of American political developments.

Capps, Walter. THE UNFINISHED WAR: Vietnam and the American Conscience. Boston, Massachusetts: Beacon, 1982. An effort to analyze the lasting effects of the war on American society.

The Century Generation. Available from: The Century Generation, Inc., Suite 9, 1000 Connecticut Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036. Concise monthly report on how events of the Vietnam era are shaping America. Also provides research and clearinghouse service.

Horne, A.D., ed. THE WOUNDED GENERATION: America After Vietnam. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1981. Analyzes the effects of the war in a collection of essays and focuses on the present and future of both the soldiers and the resisters.

Powers, Thomas. THE WAR AT HOME. Grossman, 1973. A detailed account of the antiwar movement in the United States.

U.S. Congress. House Subcommittee on Education, Training, and Employment of the Committee on Veterans Affairs. THE VIETNAM VETERANS LEADERSHIP PROGRAM. 97th Congress, 1st Session. October 22, 1981. Serial No. 97-42. Explains this program, which identifies and enables successful Vietnam veterans to give fellow Vietnam veterans, who need help, a leg up.

U.S. Congress. Senate Committee on Veterans Affairs. LEGACIES OF VIETNAM: Comparative Adjustment of Veterans and Their Peers. 97th Congress, 1st Session, March 26, 1981. Committee Print No. 6. Presents thorough study, based on field research.

U.S. Congress. Senate Committee on Veterans Affairs. MYTHS AND REALITIES: A Study of Attitudes Toward Vietnam Era Veterans. 96th Congress, 2d Session, July, 1980. Committee Print No. 29. Presents comprehensive national survey results.

Wheeler, John. TOUCHED WITH FIRE: The Future of the Vietnam Generation. New York: Franklin Watts, 1984. Explores the dynamics among the Americans who came of age during the Vietnam era. Addresses the effects on the 30 million women, as well as on the 30 million men, and addresses the interconnections among the civil rights movement, the war, war protest, women's movement, and environmental movement.

Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund. THE VIETNAM GENERATION AND RECONCILIATION: Men and Women Together. Available from: VVMF, Suite 308, 1110 Vermont Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20005. Transcript of a comprehensive 1981 roundtable discussion on the effects of the events of the Vietnam era. Participants are a cross-section of the generation.

Wilcox. Fred A. WAITING FOR AN ARMY TO DIE: The Tragedy of Agent Orange. New York: Random House, 1983. Considers the effects on U.S. soldiers of the toxic defoliant used during the war, and contains other information.