

Penne Laingen Yellow Ribbon Collection

AFC 1991/017

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American Folklife Center, Library of Congress

Washington, D.C.

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Finding aid URL: <http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.afc/eadafc.af006007>

Collection Summary

Collection Number: AFC 1991/017

Title: Penne Laingen Yellow Ribbon Collection

Inclusive Dates: 1979-1991

Repository: Archive of Folk Culture, American Folklife Center, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Extent (original): 3 linear feet; 4 boxes (containing 15 folders of manuscript material; 7 sound recordings; 63 unique graphic images; 1 videocassette; 1 computer disk; 7 artifacts)

Laingen, Penne

Creator: Laingen, L. Bruce

Parsons, Gerald E.

Language: English

Abstract: This collection contains the original yellow ribbon hung by Penne Laingen in honor of her husband, Bruce Laingen, while he was held hostage in Tehran, Iran from 1979 to 1981. Additional documentation on the custom of displaying yellow ribbons was collected by employees of the American Folklife Center.

Scope and Content

In 1979, Penne (Penelope) Laingen tied a yellow ribbon around a tree in front of her Bethesda, Maryland home when her husband, Bruce, was among those taken hostage in the United States Embassy in Tehran, Iran. The Laingens donated this yellow ribbon to the Library of Congress in 1991. The collection contains sound recordings and a photograph from that donation ceremony. Other recordings include an interview with Bruce and Penne Laingen conducted by American Folklife Center reference specialist, Gerald E. Parsons, on April 15, 1991. During the interview, the Laingens discussed their experiences during the hostage crisis and their use of the yellow ribbon and the symbolic significance it acquired. The collection also contains photographs of the Laingens taken during this interview and photographs of yellow ribbon displays during the Persian Gulf War in 1991.

Biographical History

Penne (Penelope) Laingen is the wife of Bruce Laingen who was serving as the charge d'affaires of the United States Embassy in Tehran when Iranian student revolutionaries seized the Embassy on November 4, 1979, and held the staff hostage until January 20, 1981. A few days after Bruce was taken hostage, Penne Laingen hung a yellow ribbon around a tree in the yard of her Bethesda, Maryland home as a symbol of support for her husband and the other American hostages. She did this as a way to bolster her own strength and that of their three sons throughout the crisis.

Subjects

Iran Hostage Crisis, 1979-1981

Laingen, L. Bruce

Laingen, Penne

Patriotism--United States

Persian Gulf War, 1991

Symbolism in folklore

Yellow ribbon--Symbolism

Administrative Information

Access

Reference copies of sound recordings SR01, SR02, and SR03, and the video, MV01, are available upon request in the American Folklife Reading Room. Duplication of the collection materials may be governed by copyright and other restrictions.

Acquisition

Penne and Bruce Laingen donated their yellow ribbon to the Library of Congress on July 2, 1991. Additional materials were collected by employees of the American Folklife Center.

Preferred Citation

Penne Laingen Yellow Ribbon Collection, Archive of Folk Culture, American Folklife Center, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Related Materials

Laingen, L. Bruce. *Yellow Ribbon: The Secret Journal of Bruce Laingen*. Washington: Brassey's (US), 1992.

Letters of L. Bruce Laingen, 1980 (MSS6085). Forms part of the Miscellaneous Manuscripts collection in the Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

"New Yellow Ribbon Tradition," An online presentation on the American Folklife Center web site, <http://www.loc.gov/folklife/ribbons/index.html>

Santino, Jack. "Apply a Ribbon Magnet to the Ole Humvee: The Yellow Ribbon Tradition Reborn." *Folklife Center News*, 27, no. 3, Summer 2005.

"Yellow Ribbon" subject files in the American Folklife Reading Room, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Collection Concordance by Format

Quantity	Physical Extent (original)	Location	Item Numbers
Manuscript Materials			
15	folders	Box 1	Folder 1-15
Sound Recordings			
3	7-inch reel to reel audiotapes	Box 2	SR01-SR03
3	audiocassettes	Box 2	SR04-SR06
1	10-inch reel audiotape	Box 2	SR07
Graphic Images			
1	black-and-white contact sheet	Box 1	PH001
28	black-and-white negatives	Box 1	PH001, PH002
2	black-and-white prints	Box 1	PH002, PH003
21	color prints	Box 1	PH004-PH024
21	color negatives	Box 1	PH004-PH024
11	color slides	Box 1	PH002, PH025-PH034
2	color posters	Map case	GR01
Moving Images			
1	videocassette (VHS), sound, color	Box 2	MV01
Electronic Media			
1	3.5-inch computer disk	Box 1	CF01
Artifacts			
5	novelty and display items	Box 3	AR01-AR05
1	oilcloth ribbon	Box 4	AR06

Description of Series

Container

Series

[Series I: Manuscripts](#)

[Series II: Sound Recordings](#)

[Series III: Graphic Images](#)

[Series IV: Moving Images](#)

[Series V: Artifacts](#)

[Series VI: Electronic Media](#)

Container List

Container

Contents

Series I: Manuscripts

BOX 1

- FOLDER 1 Finding Aid. 8 leaves.
- FOLDER 2 Correspondence - American Folklife Center and Laingens. February to July 1991. 8 leaves.
- FOLDER 3 Santino, Jack. "Yellow Ribbons and Seasonal Flags: The Folk Assemblage of War." *The Journal of American Folklore*, 105, no. 415, (Winter 1992): 19-33. Drafts with comments and published version. 120 leaves.
- FOLDER 4 Yellow Ribbon articles by Gerald Parsons, American Folklife Center reference specialist. 1981, 1991. 12 leaves.
- FOLDER 5 "Laingens Present Yellow Ribbon to LC." *Library of Congress Gazette*, 2, no. 28 (July 12, 1991): 3. (2 copies). 16 leaves.
- FOLDER 6 "Original Yellow Ribbon Given to LC." *Library of Congress Information Bulletin*, 50, no. 14, (July 15, 1991): 263. (5 copies). 50 leaves.
- FOLDER 7 Parker, Barbara. "Penne Laingen's Wait." *Washington Post*, (Monday, December 10, 1979). 2 leaves.
- FOLDER 8 Collected Articles: Significance of the Color Yellow. 1979-1981. 15 leaves.
- FOLDER 9 Yellow Ribbon Acquisition Ceremony. Administrative Material. July 2, 1991. 42 leaves.
- FOLDER 10 Yellow Ribbon Acquisition Ceremony. Press Coverage. July 2, 1991. 17 leaves.
- FOLDER 11 Yellow Ribbons and "No Greater Love" (Humanitarian Organization). 1980-1990. 17 leaves.
- FOLDER 12 Information regarding GR01 - Poster of Foshay Tower. 1981. 2 leaves.
[Original poster located in Reading Room map case.]
- FOLDER 13 Sound Recording Logs: SR01, SR02, SR03. Penne and Bruce Laingen interviewed on April 15, 1991, by Gerald Parsons. 13 leaves.
- FOLDER 14 Sound Recording Transcript: SR01, SR02, SR03. Penne and Bruce Laingen interviewed on April 15, 1991, by Gerald Parsons. Transcript by Peggy Yocom. 10 leaves.
- FOLDER 15 Moving Image Log: MV01. WRC Yellow Ribbon. Recording of the WRC, NBC News 4 nightly broadcast of the six o'clock news in Washington, DC featuring the Laingen yellow ribbon donation to the Library of Congress. July 2, 1991. 1 leaf.

Series II: Sound Recordings

BOX 2

- ITEM SR01 Penne and Bruce Laingen interviewed on April 15, 1991, by Gerald Parsons. Tape 1 of 3. One 7-inch reel recorded in stereo at 7.5 ips.
- ITEM SR02 Penne and Bruce Laingen interviewed on April 15, 1991, by Gerald Parsons. Tape 2 of 3. One 7-inch reel recorded in stereo at 7.5 ips.
- ITEM SR03 Penne and Bruce Laingen interviewed on April 15, 1991, by Gerald Parsons. Tape 3 of 3. One 7-inch reel recorded in stereo at 7.5 ips.
- ITEM SR04 Recording of "Tie a Yellow Ribbon Round the Ole Oak Tree" sung by Tony Orlando and Dawn. One 60-minute audiocassette.
- ITEM SR05 Recording of "She wore a yellow ribbon" sung by Mrs. Byron Coffin, Sr. of Alameda, CA. Recorded by Sidney Robertson Cowell in April 1939. AFS 3822 A1. One 30-minute audiocassette.

Series II: Sound Recordings

<i>Container</i>	<i>Contents</i>
ITEM SR06	Recordings of versions of "Tie a Yellow Ribbon Round the Ole Oak Tree" by Roger Williams and Andre Kostelanetz. One 60-minute audiocassette.
ITEM SR07	Recording of the donation of the original yellow ribbon to the Library of Congress in the Librarian's office, 6th Floor Madison Building, Washington, D.C. on July 2, 1991. One 10-inch reel recorded at 7.5 ips, 2 tracks.

Series III: Graphic Images

BOX 1

FOLDER 16	Photograph: PH001 (contact sheet and negatives). Twenty-eight images of Penne and Bruce Laingen at their Bethesda, Maryland home during their interview with Gerald Parsons. April 15, 1991. One black-and-white contact sheet, 8 x 10 in. Five black-and-white negative strips with twenty-eight frames.
FOLDER 17	Photograph: PH002 (print, slide, and negative). An image of Bruce and Penne Laingen holding up the yellow ribbon around a tree in their Bethesda, Maryland yard. April 15, 1991. One black-and-white print, 8 x 10 in. One black-and-white negative strip with one frame. One color 35 mm slide of the same image.
FOLDER 18	Photograph: PH003 (print). An image of Penne Laingen presenting the original yellow ribbon to Librarian of Congress, James H. Billington. July 2, 1991. One black-andwhite print, 8 x 10 in.
FOLDER 19	Photographs: PH004 - PH024 (prints and negatives). Twenty-one images of yellow ribbons displayed in Maryland and Virginia during the Persian Gulf War, 1991. Photographer not known. Twenty-one color prints, 3 x 5 in. Six color negative strips with twenty-one frames.
FOLDER 20	Slides: PH025 - PH034 Ten images of Penne and Bruce Laingen at their Bethesda, Maryland home during their interview with Gerald Parsons. April 15, 1991. Ten color slides, 35 mm.
ITEM GR01	Two copies of a color poster Foshay Tower at 821 Marquette Ave., Minneapolis, Hennepin County, Minnesota tied with an enormous yellow ribbon. 1981. Two color posters, 21 x 30 in. [See Reading Room Map Case]

Series IV: Moving Images

BOX 2

ITEM MV01	WRC Yellow Ribbon. Moving image of the WRC, NBC News 4 nightly broadcast of the six o'clock news in Washington, DC, featuring the Laingen yellow ribbon donation to the Library of Congress. July 2, 1991. One videocassette (VHS) in color with sound.
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Series V: Artifacts

BOX 3

ITEM AR001	"God Bless America" pin featuring an American flag and a yellow ribbon. February 25, 1991. One novelty pin, 2 in.
ITEM AR002	"Yellow Ribbon Cocktail" sticks made in the shape of a ribbon. Undated. Eight novelty plastic sticks, 7 in.
ITEM AR003	"Free the Hostages" yellow ribbon pin framed by No Greater Love, a humanitarian organization that claims to have spearheaded the yellow ribbon campaign during the Iran hostage crisis. November 4, 1979 January 20, 1981. One framed item, 6 x 6 x 1.25 in.
ITEM AR004	"Tie a Yellow Ribbon Round the Ole Oak Tree" yellow ribbon display sign. Undated. One poster mounted on a plastic display stand, 8 x 10 in.

Series V: Artifacts

<i>Container</i>	<i>Contents</i>
ITEM AR005	Mounted photograph of Bruce and Penne Laingen holding up their original yellow ribbon in the yard of their Bethesda, Maryland home. April 15, 1991. One color photograph mounted on a plastic display stand, 5.5 x 8 in.
	BOX 4
ITEM AR006	The original yellow ribbon hung by Penne Laingen in honor of her husband, Bruce Laingen, while he was held hostage in Iran. 1979-1981. One oilcloth ribbon, 21 x 44 in.

Series VI: Electronic Media

	BOX 1
FOLDER 21	Computer Disk: CF01 Administrative files related to the collection. One computer disk.