

Surviving War Surviving Peace

THE CENTRAL HIGHLANDERS OF VIETNAM



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An exhibit in the
UC Irvine Langson Library
Muriel Ansley Reynolds Exhibit Gallery

May - November 2007

Curated by
Joseph Carrier, Ph.D.

FOREWORD

Welcome to the UCI Libraries' spring 2007 exhibit, *Surviving War, Surviving Peace: The Central Highlanders of Vietnam*. This exhibit of photographs of ethnic minority groups in the central highlands of Vietnam was inspired by a recent donation to our Southeast Asian Archive from Joseph Carrier, who holds a Ph.D. from UCI's School of Social Sciences. Dr. Carrier took most of the photographs during the 1960s, followed by some in January 2007, while visiting the highlands and getting to know members of some of the ethnic groups who live there. Although he was in Vietnam during the War era of the 1960s working for The RAND Corporation, his doctoral work in Anthropology at UCI also informed his deep interest in ethnographic issues.

The opening program on May 15th is a very special one. Dr. Carrier and two friends who also spent time in the central highlands will form a panel, each commenting on his or her individual experiences during the Vietnam War era of the 1960s and 1970s. Each was in Southeast Asia, and in the highlands, for a very different reason, but all had their own lives deeply affected by the highlanders whom they came to know. The program will be moderated by Professor Charles Wheeler of UCI's Department of History, whose own doctoral work on early trade in Vietnam brought him in close contact with the people of the central highlands during his research travels.

I hope you find that *Surviving War, Surviving Peace* enhances your understanding of this moving example of the members of an ethnic minority group struggling to maintain their cultural identity and quality of life during a time of complex change in their country.

On behalf of both the Partners of the UCI Libraries and the entire library staff, we welcome you to this exhibit and invite you to return to view others in the future.

Gerald J. Munoff
University Librarian

SURVIVING WAR, SURVIVING PEACE

THE CENTRAL HIGHLANDERS OF VIETNAM

The historical significance of my photographs of the indigenous peoples living in Vietnam's central highlands is that they present a way of life that is mostly gone. This exhibit illustrates some of the changes that have taken place among the ethnic minority peoples living in the highlands during the past 45 years. Referred to as *highlanders* in English and *montagnards* in French, they live in the Truong Son—a mountainous region in South Vietnam known as the Long Mountains that extends south of the 17th parallel to the delta of the Mekong River. It is bordered on the west by the mountains in Laos and Cambodia and on the east by an elongated narrow coastal plain.

The ethnic central highlander peoples resemble other Southeast Asians such as Cambodians, Indonesians, and Malays, who also speak similar languages. The highlander population is made up of at least 21 distinct ethnic groups; those represented in this exhibit include the Bahnar, Bru, Cua, Hre, Jarai, Katu, Mngong, Rhade, Sedang, and Stieng. During the time period 1965-1967, before the most serious disruptions of the American Vietnam War took place, the ethnic highlander population was estimated at 807,000.

Since the reunification of the country in spring 1975, official policies of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam have led to the resettling of "over one million lowland Vietnamese in the highlands in order to bring Vietnamese culture and lowland adaptation to the highlanders. Highlanders are being moved into Vietnamese settlements to enable their 'transition to socialism,' a process of Vietnamization that threatens what remains of their shattered world" (Gerald Canon Hickey, 1993).

I first met highlanders in August 1962 during one of my first work assignments to evaluate a joint U.S./Vietnamese military medical civic action project in various Hre villages located in the mountainous areas of Quang Ngai Province, a coastal province in central South Vietnam. I took the photos during the years I worked in Vietnam on and off from 1962 to 1973. I was in country a total of about three years: from July-December 1962; January-December 1965; January-June 1966; January-June 1967; and March 1972-March 1973. Except for the 1972-1973 time period, I worked on projects related to the war and counterinsurgency in South Vietnam for

The RAND Corporation and was based in Saigon (now Ho-Chi-Minh City). From spring 1972 to spring 1973, I worked as the onsite Staff Officer for the National Academy of Sciences Committee on the Effects of Herbicides in South Vietnam and was again based in Saigon.

It is important to note that most of the photos were not taken for any of my work assignments. The fact is, however, I never traveled to the highlands without a camera. While traveling there on work assignments, I used whatever free time I had available to visit villages and photograph the highlander peoples. I also used vacation time to visit the highlands with anthropologist Gerry Hickey while he was engaged in ethnographic fieldwork for The RAND Corporation, as well as while he was delivering needed food and clothing to highlander refugees in Kontum, Pleiku and Ban Me Thuot. I was thus able to take additional photos of the highlander peoples and their activities.

Joseph Carrier, May 2007

The main exhibit case includes four sections: a dedication, followed by chronological sections focusing on traditional highlander culture, their experience as refugees during the Vietnam War, and their life as of 2007. The four smaller cases focus on a group of four people who have worked with, and been deeply affected by, the highlanders: Joe Carrier, Jackie Maier, Mike Little, and Gerald Canon Hickey.

Surviving War, Surviving Peace was curated by Joe Carrier. Most photographs in the exhibit were Dr. Carrier's gift to the Southeast Asian Archive in the UCI Libraries, where copies are available for research use. The three-dimensional artifacts and some other items were generously loaned by Dr. Carrier, Jackie Maier, and Mike Little. This exhibit celebrates their dedication to and love for the central highlanders of Vietnam.

DEDICATION

I have dedicated both my collection of photographs and this exhibit to the memory of Nay Luett, Minister for Development of Ethnic Minorities for South Vietnam from 1971 to 1975. Luett was a valiant and charismatic Jarai leader who struggled against all forms of tyranny in support of highlander peoples. He did what he could to help his people adapt and survive during this most violent episode in their history. He and his family were on the American Embassy list to be evacuated by the U.S. military during the crucial few days in late April 1975 when the North Vietnamese forces were moving their tanks into Saigon. For unknown reasons, the Americans never came, and they were left behind.

After the ensuing takeover of South Vietnam by military forces of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, South Vietnamese government officials still living in Saigon were rounded up. Nay Luett was arrested by security police and sent to a communist labor camp. He spent the next eight years working at hard labor and is believed to have died in the camp in 1983 under horrific circumstances.

1. **Map of the central highlands region of Vietnam.**
Adapted from: Gerald Canon Hickey. *Free in the Forest: Ethnohistory of the Vietnamese Central Highlands, 1954-1976*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982, p. 321.
2. **Nay Luett speaks to evacuated refugees in Pleiku.**
Two photographs by Joe Carrier, May 1972.
3. **Jackie Maier learning Cua language from villagers near Tra Bong.** Photographer unknown, 1966.
4. **Joe Carrier with members of his adopted Cambodian family on their farm near Siem Reap, Cambodia.** Photograph by Gail Myzoe, 2007.
5. **Mike Little on road patrol between Pleiku and An Khe.**
Photographer unknown, 1968.

TRADITIONAL HIGHLAND CULTURES

My photographs taken from 1962 to 1967 document the traditional life of the ethnic highlanders prior to the havoc wreaked on their culture and homes during the Vietnam War. As the images reveal, they were village oriented and lived in longhouses built up off the ground on pilings. The space under the house has many uses, such as storage for forest products and artifacts and as a place to pen animals. Each village was governed by elders whose authority was primarily founded on supernatural beings or spirits, but also on their personal skills, intelligence, courage, and reputation for wisdom.

Historically, highlanders lived in harmony with nature and were self-sufficient. They hunted and trapped in the forests, farmed rice, cotton, and other agricultural products in cleared land nearby their villages, and grew fruit and vegetables in kitchen gardens. Their settlements were carefully located near springs or streams so they could have a source of good water and could bathe. Their longhouses were constructed of materials available in the forest: hardwood, bamboo, thatching grasses, and strands of rattan. The highlanders also made their own clothes, mats, and carrying baskets, and forged carpentry, hunting and farm tools made of iron. The women wove textiles from cotton (blankets, women's skirts, slings for carrying infants, jackets, and loincloths), and the men wove sleeping mats and baskets from rattan, made fish traps from bamboo, and made crossbows for hunting from tropical hardwoods. Working iron and carving wood for handles, they made machetes, hoes, and knives of varying length for different uses.

Even though the highlanders were self-sufficient at the village level, they did have trade relationships with lowlanders—the people who lived east of the mountains on the narrow coastal plain. They mostly traded forest products for salt, ceramic rice-alcohol jars, and metal gongs. Relations were not always peaceful, however. The highlanders were viewed as backward, warlike, darker-skinned people, and thus labeled as *moi* (savages).

In the early 1950s, the highlanders became entangled in a conflict that evolved into the French Indochina War, which forever ended their relative

isolation from the rest of the world. They became a people in between—with the French on one side and the nationalist communist Viet Minh on the other. Although the major battles of the Indochina War were fought in the mountains of North Vietnam, highlander men were caught up in the conflict and fought in the forces of both sides.

6. **Young Cua man near Tra Bong dressed in “high fashion” with beads, earrings, and comb.** Photograph by Jackie Maier, 1966.
7. **Two combs from the Cua culture made of metal (pictured in item 6) and bamboo.** Ca. 1960s. Loaned by Jackie Maier.
8. **Stieng man wearing traditional loincloth, with handmade knife and pipe, in a village near the district town of Quan Don Luan.** Photograph by Joe Carrier, July 1965.
9. **Handmade wooden knife and sheath from the Stieng culture (pictured in item 8), purchased from its owner.** Ca. 1960s. Loaned by Joe Carrier.
10. **Cua ritual during buffalo sacrifice, near Tra Bong.** Photograph by Jackie Maier, 1964.
11. **Bru children gather to be photographed by a foreign visitor to the village.** Photograph by Joe Carrier, April 1965.
12. **A Rhade family gathers at the entrance to their longhouse in Buon Krom village near Ban Me Thuot.** Photograph by Joe Carrier, spring 1965.
13. **Tables and stools expertly crafted from local hardwoods by Rhade woodcarvers, Buon Krom village.** Photograph by Joe Carrier, spring 1965.

14. **Photograph of hand-carved Rhade stool (pictured in item 13), owned by Joe Carrier.**
15. **A remote Hre village surrounded by farmlands that have been cleared and prepared for planting using tools and fire.** Photograph by Joe Carrier, August 1962.
16. **A Bru village near Khe Sanh, later destroyed in 1968 during major battles between North Vietnamese troops and U.S. Marines.** Photograph by Joe Carrier, April 1965.
17. **Interior of a Rhade longhouse in Bruon Krom village; the Rhade have the longest houses, up to 300 feet long, with as many as 100 residents.** Photograph by Joe Carrier, spring 1965.
18. **Longhouses in a Hre village near Gia Vuc.** Photograph by Joe Carrier, March 1965.

REFUGEES IN WARTIME

The treaty that brought an end to the French Indochina War led to the division of Vietnam into north and south, putting into motion a series of events that would forever change the lives of the highlanders. The Vietnam War began in 1954, finally ending in 1975 with the communist unification of the country as the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam. During the War, major battles led to bombing of highland villages by South Vietnamese and American airplanes—and to mortar and rocket attacks and nocturnal assaults on villages by communist insurgents and North Vietnamese military forces. Ultimately the War resulted in the uprooting and death of more than 200,000 highlanders and the destruction of 85% of their villages. Most of the villages shown in my photos are no longer in existence.

Some of the most horrible effects of the war on the highlanders occurred in the late 1960s and early 1970s, when many of them were displaced to refugee camps. Refugees were a mix of Jarai Arap, Bahnar, Sedang, and Rengao who fled into Kontum and were airlifted and then trucked to Pleiku. Camps were located in or near three towns: Kontum, Pleiku, and Ban Me Thuot. The refugees were left only with the belongings they could carry; they therefore became totally dependent upon outside agencies for help. Conditions in the camps were wretched, as my photographs reveal.

These photos were taken in 1972 when I traveled with Gerry Hickey to help deliver food, clothing, and household supplies that had been gathered by a group of American women in Saigon. Gerry wanted to make sure that all supplies were actually received by the refugees, so he accompanied them on the contract airplanes, had the supplies transferred to trucks, and saw to it that they were delivered to the camps. On several occasions, Nay Luett helped with the distribution of supplies.

I find it deeply moving that some refugees incorporated their horrific wartime experiences into traditional arts, as revealed in the helicopters and other signs of warfare woven into a baby's swaddling blanket (see item 31).

REFUGEES IN WARTIME

19. **A Hre family whose village was relocated from the war zone to safety west of Quang Ngai city.** Photograph by Joe Carrier, August 1962.
20. **Upland Cua refugees hosted by lowland Cua relatives in a village near Tra Bong; the Cua hosted refugees from other Cua villages whenever possible.** Photograph by Joe Carrier, May 1966.
21. **Crude shelters in Pleiku camp, to which 8,000 refugees from various cultures had been airlifted and trucked from Kontum following the North Vietnamese spring 1972 offensive.** Photograph by Joe Carrier, August 1972.
22. **The refugee camp in Kontum, where highlanders from several cultures sought refuge after the spring 1972 offensive.** Photograph by Joe Carrier, August 1972.
23. **Upland Cua refugees in a shelter provided by Lowland Cua relatives.** Photograph by Jackie Maier, 1964.
24. **Woven bowl with wooden legs.** Ca. 1960s. Loaned by Joe Carrier.
25. **Cinnamon bark, an important cash crop used by highlanders for trade with Vietnamese lowlanders.** 1960s. Loaned by Jackie Maier.
26. **Hand-carved turtle made by a Rhade man.** Ca. 1960s. Loaned by Joe Carrier.

27. **A helicopter drawn on a tent by a refugee from Pleiku, Dan San refugee camp east of Ban Me Thuot; refugees had been transported by trucks through an area thick with North Vietnamese troops.** Photograph by Joe Carrier, December 1972.
28. **Wounded Katu children in an orphanage in Danang, Quang Ngai Province.** Photographer unknown, 1964.
29. **A Jarai Arap refugee woman weaving a swaddling blanket, Pleiku camp.** Photograph by Joe Carrier, August 1972.
30. **Jarai Arap refugee woman holding her child in a woven swaddling blanket depicting helicopters, Pleiku camp.** Photograph by Joe Carrier, August 1972.
31. **A woven swaddling blanket depicting helicopters, soldiers, and rifles, in addition to traditional designs; woven by a Jarai Arap woman in the Pleiku refugee camp.** Summer 1972. Loaned by Joe Carrier.

RETURN TO THE HIGHLANDS

The Vietnam War ended more than thirty years ago, and although military battles have long ended, ethnic highlanders have had to fight for their rights in order to survive as a people, even in peacetime. Much of the old highlander culture no longer exists. Acculturation of younger highlander men to Vietnamese and Western ways had already started during the War; since then, it has steadily increased.

Many Vietnamese still believe that the highlanders are backward and tradition-bound, which directly contributes to the higher poverty rate that exists among ethnic minorities (nearly 50%) in comparison with ethnic Vietnamese (about 15%). This attitude often leads the government not to take into account the effects of official programs on the livelihood of highlanders, such as a policy to limit shifting cultivation, based on misconceptions about agricultural practices and migratory movements.

Massive resettlement of ethnic Vietnamese from the lowlands to the highlands has resulted in the population of the highlands region consisting of as few as 30% ethnic minority peoples in some areas. The ethnic minorities also have experienced a steady loss of their ancestral land due to the cutting down of forests, the resettlement of lowlanders, and the fact that poverty has led some highlanders to sell their land to make ends meet.

In 2001 and 2004 major demonstrations occurred in which the ethnic highlanders protested religious repression and widespread confiscation of their ancestral lands. Reports issued by Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International, and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees have recently concluded that serious human rights violations such as these continue to be imposed on some ethnic groups.

The hardiness of the highlanders has served them well, however, and as of 2007, they have been able to maintain important elements of their social and cultural life. The Socialist Republic of Vietnam officially recognizes the ethnic minority groups and has passed laws designed to protect them. Although the government's implementation of these laws has been

flawed, it is encouraging to see that Vietnam has invited observers from international organizations—including the World Health Organization, the World Bank, Human Rights Watch, and Amnesty International—to come to Vietnam to monitor treatment of the highlanders.

32. **Mother and child at a roadside market south of Pleiku; the woman's father was an African American soldier, her mother Jarai.** Photograph by Joe Carrier, January 2007.
33. **Interior of a contemporary house in a Jarai village, south of Pleiku.** Photograph by Joe Carrier, January 2007.
34. **View of a Hre village, largely unchanged since the pre-War era, near Bato in Quang Ngai Province.** Photograph by Joe Carrier, January 2007.
35. **A Catholic church constructed in 2000, located in Kontum, that evokes the traditional longhouse style.** Photograph by Joe Carrier, January 2007.
36. **A Sedang communal tribal house, located near Kontum, possibly funded by the local governmental commune.** Photograph by Joe Carrier, January 2007.
37. **Small model of a traditional men's longhouse used by the Bahnar, Sedang, and Rengao cultures.** Ca. 1960s. Loaned by Jackie Maier.
38. **Restaurant built by the Daklak Tourist agency for foreign visitors to Buon Jun, a Mnong village adjacent to Lak Lake.** Photograph by Joe Carrier, January 2007.
39. **Large model of a traditional men's longhouse.** Ca. 1960s. Loaned by Joe Carrier.

40. **A Cua man wearing Western clothing, Tra Bong District.**
Photograph by Joe Carrier, January 2007.
41. **A Jarai woman smokes a pipe and carries her child in the traditional swaddling blanket, while children wear Western clothing, in Pleiku, Gia Lai Province.** Photograph by Joe Carrier, January 2007.
42. **A young Mnong man herds cows on the highway near Lak Lake, Dak Lak Province.** Photograph by Joe Carrier, January 2007.
43. **A smiling Cua boy with his newspaper, Tra Bong District, Quang Ngai Province.** Photograph by Joe Carrier, January 2007.

JOSEPH CARRIER, PHOTOGRAPHER

Joe Carrier's interest in the ethnic minority peoples of Vietnam's central highlands began in late summer 1962 when he was evaluating a joint U.S./Vietnamese military medical civic action exercise in several Hre villages. The villages were located in the mountains of Quang Ngai, a coastal province in central South Vietnam. While in the villages he used his free time to roam around and, with an interpreter's help, talk with the people, observe various aspects of their daily life—and take photographs.

The Vietnam War had not yet begun in 1962, and U.S. military personnel acted only as advisors to South Vietnamese Republic of Vietnam military units (ARVN). The mountainous areas of Quang Ngai Province, however, were mostly controlled by insurgents, so the joint medical team with which he worked was only allowed to visit villages that were considered safe by both the Vietnamese military and American military advisors. With the protection of the ARVN military, their plan was to travel to some villages by surface transportation and to more remote and less secure villages by helicopter. However, because of a nearby failed military operation against the insurgents the day after they arrived, the ARVN had eight men killed in action; one helicopter was destroyed and two were put out of commission. There were no helicopters available for use by the medical team for four days in a row, so they ended up just traveling on four different days to four different Hre villages by road.

Before leaving Vietnam at the end of 1962, Carrier became acquainted with another ethnic central highlander group, the Jarai. During the Christmas holidays he traveled to the remote small town of Pleiku and, with the help of a Vietnamese Air Force friend stationed there, visited a nearby Jarai village located within a safe walking distance. The village chief greeted him and invited him to participate in a ceremony underway and “drink from the jar”—a welcoming ritual for a visitor that entails drinking alcohol (made by fermenting rice in a jar and adding water). It was the beginning of many “drinks from the jar” in villages of various ethnic groups in the highlands. Carrier's visits took place during the three years he worked in South Vietnam on projects related to the War

and counterinsurgency for The RAND Corporation (between 1962 and 1967) and for the National Academy of Sciences (1972-1973).

Most of Joe's photographs were taken during 1965-1967 and 1972-1973 while visiting villages and refugee camps with Gerald Canon Hickey, an anthropologist who was doing ethnographic studies of the people of the central highlands for The RAND Corporation. After returning from South Vietnam in mid-1967, Joe decided to start a new career as an anthropologist. He enrolled at UC Irvine in 1967 and received his Ph.D. in Social Sciences in 1972. He then returned to South Vietnam for a year as a staff member for the Herbicide Committee of the National Academy of Sciences.

Joe finally returned to the central highlands in January 2007 to take additional photographs for this exhibit and to try to see what had happened to the highlanders since he had last visited them in spring 1973.

44. **Joe Carrier "drinking from the jar" in a Jarai village near Pleiku.** Photographer unknown, 1962.
45. **"Quang-Ngai notes." Diary kept by Joe Carrier while in the central highlands of Vietnam.** August 1962.
46. **Joe Carrier with a Cua family in their village near Tra Bong.** Photograph by Gerald Hickey, May 1966.
47. **Joe Carrier's negative envelopes from Vietnamese photo shops, and DVD with digital copies of his photographs.** 1960s and 2006.
48. **Kontum Tourist Company.** Travel brochure, ca. 2007.
49. **"Estimates of Central Highlander Population."** Compiled by Joe Carrier, 2007.

JACKIE MAIER, LINGUIST

Jackeline Maier worked as a linguist-translator in Vietnam for the Summer Institute of Linguistics and Wycliffe Bible Translators from 1963-1975. The objective of her work was to learn and analyze the languages of ethnic minority groups living in the central highlands of Vietnam—languages that had no written form. Her research and fieldwork included analyzing the grammatical structure of each language, determining its phonology (sound system), deciding on the orthography (symbols for the sounds), and compiling a dictionary. Using the information collected, Jackie then prepared literacy materials and taught the written language to those who spoke it. She also published materials in the languages studied, in cooperation with the South Vietnamese Ministry of Education.

Jackie's work in Vietnam required flexibility due to unstable conditions caused by the Vietnam War. Her first assignment was to learn the language of the Takua people, who lived in a mountainous area accessible only by small aircraft. On arrival she and her colleague Eva Burton found the people living in refugee settlements quite friendly and began their work. Unfortunately, after only three weeks of data gathering, unfriendly forces encircled their study location, and they were airlifted to a safer area. They never were able to resume contact with the Takua.

Several months later Jackie and Eva began their second assignment—the Cua language. The Cua they studied lived in a river valley in a remote mountainous area in the western Quang Ngai Province, near the town of Tra Bong. They found their new location ideal; the people were friendly and receptive to the study of their language. Fieldwork with the Cua was also cut short, however, when heavy rain forced the linguists to be evacuated a few weeks later. Their simple little house and belongings were washed away, and their lives saved by their new Cua friends.

Fortunately, Jackie and Eva were able to continue their Cua work despite disruptions in the ensuing years. Although unable to live in close proximity to Cua villages, they found Cua people who were willing to

relocate to safe locations for brief periods to assist them. By the time they left South Vietnam in April 1975, they had made considerable progress in reaching many of their research goals for the Cua language.

50. **Jackie Maier's handwritten notes comparing vocabulary in the Cua, Hre, and Katu languages.** Ca. 1960s.
51. **Oh Hok Sarooy: Pok Kool Kua [Cua language primer].**
Saigon: Summer Institute in Linguistics, 1973. No. 1 in a set of 3.
52. **Em Hoc Toan: Quyen 1 & 2 [Pre-literacy primers designed to teach Western concepts of written numbers and words].**
Saigon: Summer Institute in Linguistics, 1973.
53. **Bay Hok Pok Kool Kua: Cua Language Lessons.** Written by Dinh Do, Dinh Moc, and Jacqueline Maier. Saigon: Summer Institute in Linguistics, 1974.

MIKE LITTLE, SOLDIER

Mike Little went to South Vietnam in 1967 as a 21-year-old soldier. He was stationed in Pleiku, a small town in the central highlands, assigned to a Military Police unit called the *Roadrunners*. His unit's major mission was to patrol key roads in the area, guarding military convoys. After nine months he began to get restless during the many hours of downtime between patrols. Having become the leader of the *Roadrunner* patrols, he found himself looking for distractions—and found one.

The bridge over the Ayun River had been blown up by insurgent forces before his arrival, so army engineers had built a temporary one-lane structure. M.P.'s were stationed on both sides at checkpoints to direct traffic when convoys were present. It thus became a meeting place for eating C-rations and taking a war break. It was also a gathering point for a number of Bahnar boys who waited patiently all day for leftovers. They felt intimidated by American soldiers, so kept their distance—but they were always appreciative when an extra can of rations came their way. One day Mike rested his patrol at the river checkpoint, waiting for the next convoy to roll into their area. The usual cluster of Bahnar children was seated close by on the sand-bagged bunker, quiet and unassuming—just waiting for food. A prankster by nature, Mike picked up a pebble and pitched it towards one of the unsuspecting boys while he wasn't looking. That bit of mischief changed Mike's life forever. The boy's name was Kenh. Along with many other children from his Bahnar village, he became part of Mike's life during the remaining three months of his tour of duty. Kenh and his friends became Mike's adopted family.

After returning home in 1968, Mike briefly stayed in contact with his Bahnar children through *Roadrunners* friends still stationed in Pleiku. He then lost contact until 1994, when political changes finally allowed him to return and look for them. Ever since their tearful reunion, Mike, his wife Marion, and his son Sean have maintained close contact with their Bahnar families, visiting eight times and funding everything from new houses and a church to tractors and motorbikes, from education and computers to medical care and wedding celebrations. But the greatest need, and most of their support, is for the most basic of all needs: food.

54. **Postcards depicting ethnic peoples in Vietnam.** Four postcards captioned in French; dates unknown. Loaned by Mike Little.
55. **Mike Little and friends in South Vietnam during the War.** Three photographs, 1960s. Loaned by Mike Little.
56. **Kenh in front of his makeshift house (1968).
Kenh and his family on the day of our reunion (1994).
Kenh's oldest son, Kui, with his wife and daughter in
front of their new Western-style house (2006).**
Three photographs by Mike Little, 1968-2006.
57. Michael Little. **"2,190 days later: Another return to Vietnam's
central highlands."** Unpublished typescript, 2006.

GERALD CANON HICKEY, ANTHROPOLOGIST

Anthropologist Dr. Gerald Canon Hickey first went to Vietnam in 1956 with the Michigan State University Group. His first significant ethnographic research project (in 1958-1959) was a study of Khanh Hau, a Mekong River delta village in Vietnam. His chief interest, however, was in the people who lived in the mountains. As Hickey notes in his recent autobiography, *Window on a War* (Texas Tech University Press, 2002), from the time of his first visit to the Central Highlands in 1956 he “was constantly intrigued by the aura of mystery cloaking the mountain country like its persistent mists. Nature, vast, complex, and harboring unimagined secrets, seemed to envelop the mountain people. Their eyes, ears, and senses of smell and taste told them things lost on those whose natural instincts have been dulled by the conceits of ‘civilization’.”

Hickey began his major ethnographic research on the mountain people when he returned to South Vietnam in January 1964 on a project for The RAND Corporation. He worked not only as an ethnographer, but also “as a friend interested in their efforts to preserve their ethnic identity and way of life.” He became acquainted with major highlander leaders such as Nay Luett and Touneh Han Tho, helping them establish the Ministry for Ethnic Minorities and learn about the need for titles to their land.

Hickey’s research took him into areas of great danger during the Vietnam War. While doing field work with the Katu people in a remote area of Quang Nam Province in the summer of 1964, for example, the only safe place for him to stay was in a U.S. Special Forces camp called Nam Dong. On 6 July 1964 “a force of nine hundred crack Communist troops assaulted the small post with its 350 defenders,” and Hickey was lucky to be alive afterwards. He nevertheless continued his ethnographic research with the highlander people until leaving Vietnam in 1973.

Following his return to the United States, Hickey wrote and published *Ethnohistory of the Vietnamese Central Highlands* (Yale University Press, 1982, in two volumes) and *Shattered World: Adaptation and Survival among Vietnam’s Highland Peoples during the Vietnam War* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 1993).

58. Gerald Canon Hickey. ***The Major Ethnic Groups of the South Vietnamese Highlands.*** Santa Monica, Calif.: The RAND Corporation, April 1964. Loaned by Joe Carrier.
59. "Katu trading party at a Giang river settlement" and "Cua children at Tra bong." Photographs published in: Gerald Canon Hickey. *Sons of the Mountains: Ethnohistory of the Vietnamese Central Highlands to 1954.* New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982. Loaned by Joe Carrier.
60. Gerald Canon Hickey. ***Shattered World: Adaptation and Survival among Vietnam's Highland Peoples during the Vietnam War.*** Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1983. Loaned by Joe Carrier.
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