



## Glendale Library, Arts & Culture

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### Finding Aid for the Ruth G. Babcock WAC Mothers' Association Collection, 1943-1945, 1968

#### Collection Overview

**Title:** Ruth G. Babcock WAC Mothers' Association Collection

**Dates:** 1943-1945, 1968

**ID:** RGB

**Primary Creator:** Ruth G. Babcock

**Extent:** 0.21 linear feet, 1 box

**Arrangement:** This collection is arranged in alphabetical order by folder title.

**Forms of Material:** Paper Records, Photographic Materials

**Language of Materials:** English

#### Abstract

Ruth G. Babcock was a resident of Glendale, California and the founder and president of Chapter 71 of the WAC Mothers' Association, an organization established to aid members of the Women's Army Corps wherever they served during World War II. The *Ruth G. Babcock WAC Mothers' Association Collection* primarily consists of administrative correspondence, reports, procedural documents, newsletters and news clippings, as well as WAC recruitment materials. Two items, one a group photograph, document the enlistment of Ruth's daughter Virginia. Another item documents the imprisonment of Ruth's son-in-law, Sherwin L. Barton in a German prisoner of war camp.

#### Biographical/Administrative History

Ruth Gernon Babcock was born in 1894 in Grand Rapids, Michigan, the only child of prominent lawyer George Shepard Boltwood and Mary Gernon Rice. Ruth's father was a Yale graduate, originally from Amherst, Massachusetts. He came to Grand Rapids following the retirement of his father, Rev. Lucius M. Boltwood, an Amherst librarian and genealogical researcher associated with the Library of Congress.

Ruth married Henry Andrews Babcock when she was 23, just two weeks before Henry's enlistment in the Army Air Corps on July 5, 1917. Originally from Lebanon Springs, New York, Henry received Bachelors and Masters of Science degrees from the Massachusetts

Institute of Technology. In 1916, he was awarded a Ph.D. from Northwestern University where he taught physics and mathematics until 1933.

While at the university in Evanston, Illinois, Ruth and Henry had five daughters: Virginia (1920), Barbara (1922), Dorothy (1924), Elizabeth, (1926), and Susan (1931). The family moved to Glendale in 1934, where Henry worked at William H. Babcock and Sons, Inc. as a real estate appraiser and engineer, eventually becoming partner. Henry A. Babcock was a prominent figure in the development of Los Angeles, having studied, reported upon, and recommended actions to demolish Bunker Hill, and methods to enhance transportation throughout the city. His papers are currently held at Cornell University.

Ruth's oldest daughter, Virginia Andrews Babcock, was fourteen when the family moved to Glendale. After high school she completed two years of college and became a secretary. Virginia enlisted in the Women's Army Corps on September 14, 1943 when she was 23, and was inducted into Company 4, Regiment 1. By 1945, she was with Company 15, 3<sup>rd</sup> regiment at the WAC Training Center, Fort Des Moines, Iowa. She served as a private for the duration of the war, plus an additional six months. Virginia returned to Glendale by 1946 where she attended college, became a teacher, and later, a librarian. In 1962, she married Albert Bernard Cox at McGuire Air Force Base in New Jersey and moved to Austin, Texas. By 2009, Virginia was living in Seattle, Washington where she died in 2010.

Ruth's second daughter Barbara did not enlist, but in 1943 at the age of 21, married a pilot, Sherwin Lemmon Barton. Barton flew with the Eighth Army Air Force, 100<sup>th</sup> Group, and was shot down over Germany on March 1944, becoming a prisoner of war until the U.S. Army arrived at his camp in June 1945. After the war, Barbara and her husband lived in California and New Mexico, where Sherwin served in the Army Reserves and worked as a contractor. The couple had three daughters, Sharon Lee, Nancy, and Lynda, and the marriage ended in divorce. In 1961, she married Carlos Clifford Crofoot, a district manager for Texaco Inc. with whom she had a daughter, Christy. Barbara died in Burbank at the age of 81 in 2002.

On February 11, 1944, Ruth's daughter Dorothy Gernon Babcock followed her oldest sister into the WACs. She was twenty and had completed two years of college. As a private, Dorothy served as a laboratory technician at a base hospital in California. After the war, she graduated from Stanford with a Bachelor of Science degree in biology. She met her husband, Charles Leeotis Smith, at Stanford and they were married in Los Angeles in 1948. In 1950, Dorothy and her family moved to Tulsa, Oklahoma where she raised three children, Lee Stephen, Laura Gernon, and Jeffrey Andrews. In the 1970s, she became a medical technologist at St. Francis Hospital where she pioneered tissue typing for kidney transplants and paternity testing. Dorothy's deep interest in pipe organs and organ music led her become a charter member of the Sooner State Chapter of the American Theatre Organ Society. She also contributed to the *Journal of the American Theatre Organ Society*. Dorothy died in Tulsa in 2009.

The WAC Mothers Association, founded in 1943, grew to include more than seventy-two chapters, organized into nine regional areas, each with its own director. Its objective was to aid and support recruitment activities. Ruth founded the Glendale Chapter, #71, of the Women's Army Corps (WAC) Mothers' Association in 1945 and served as its president until 1946. The Glendale chapter was one of at least three in California and its activities included helping to sponsor memorial services for fallen WACs. It also provided

gifts and other support for the 78<sup>th</sup> and 79<sup>th</sup> WAC Hospital Companies at Birmingham General Hospital in Van Nuys where a "Spirit of Glendale" platoon was stationed. In addition to this organization, Ruth was involved in various other civic organizations including the Red Cross, Daughters of the American Revolution, and Daughters of American Colonists. Ruth G. Babcock passed away at the age of ninety-eight in 1992.

## Scope and Contents

The *Ruth G. Babcock WAC Mothers' Association Collection* consists of administrative papers and correspondence of Chapter 71 of the WAC Mothers' Association. The Collection documents the proceedings and programs of the organization, and includes its constitution and by-laws, reports of the organization's activities, lists of chapters with member names and addresses, copies of the newsletter, *News and Views To and From the WAC*, as well as WAC brochures and booklets. In addition, the collection includes administrative papers and correspondence of the Women's Army Corps of Southern California, Civilian Advisory Committee, an organization headed by Helen H. Garretson. The Committee worked in collaboration with the WAC Mothers' Association to help with WAC recruitment, and the two groups also organized at least one memorial service together.

Two of Ruth's daughters, Virginia and Dorothy, enlisted as WACs. Dorothy's activities are not represented in the collection. However, a few items from Virginia's service are present, including the collection's only photograph, a group portrait of Company 15, 3<sup>rd</sup> Regiment. On the photograph's verso, Virginia noted the names of several officers and others. Another item of interest in the collection is a photocopied page of a card documenting the imprisonment of Ruth's son-in-law, Sherwin L. Barton in a German prisoner of war camp. Barton's WW II diaries are held in the archives of Pennsylvania State University.

## Subjects/Access Terms

**Personal Names:** Babcock, Ruth G., 1894-1992  
Babcock, Virginia Andrews, 1920-2010  
Garretson, Helen H., 1894-1997  
Babcock, Henry Andrews, 1891-1975  
Barton, Sherwin L. (Sherwin Lemmon), 1918-1995

**Corporate Name:** United States. Army. Women's Army Corps

**Topical Terms:** World War, 1939-1945--Women  
Women's history  
United States. Army. Women's Army Auxiliary Corps

**Geographic Names:** Glendale (Calif.)  
Los Angeles County (Calif.)

## Administrative Information

**Processing Information:** Jacqueline Zak, 2018

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**Conditions Governing Access:** The collection is open for research use.

**Preferred Citation:** Ruth G. Babcock WAC Mothers' Association Collection. Glendale Central Library History Room. Glendale Library, Arts & Culture.

**Acquisition:** Unknown

**Related Materials:** [Guide to the Henry Andrews Babcock Papers, Cornell](#)  
[Sherwin L. Barton World War II Papers, Pennsylvania State](#)

## Collection Contents

### Box 1

**Folder 1:** Babcock, Ruth G. and Virginia Babcock Papers and Photographic Print, 1943-1945, 1968

**Folder 2:** *News and Views To and From the WAC* Newsletter and Newspaper Clippings, 1945

**Folder 3:** WAC Mothers' Association Administrative Correspondence, 1945-1946

**Folder 4:** WAC Mothers' Association Administrative Papers and Reports, 1945-1946

**Folder 5:** Women's Army Corps of Southern California, Civilian Advisory Committee Papers, 1944-1945

**Folder 6:** Women's Army Corps Recruitment Booklets, Brochures, and Information Cards, 1943-1945