

Student Handout
Oakland Museum of California
What's Going On? California and the Vietnam Era
Lesson Plan #2

1968: Year of Social Change and Turning Point in Vietnam and the U.S.

Oral History

Bill Brent

Bill Brent was a Captain in the Black Panther Party.

My name is Brent, Bill Brent and I a Captain of the Black Panther Party associated with the Central Headquarters of the Black Panther Party, located in Oakland California. Oakland, population 400,000—32% black. In Merritt College two students, Huey Newton and Bobby Seale. Later they began to organize their brothers against their closest enemy, the police whom they call the PIGS. In 1966, taking advantage of a law, which authorized the carrying of visible arms patrols of the Black Panther Party for Self-Defense, cruised in the ghetto following police cars. As soon as a black is arrested they check the procedure making sure the law is observed and their brother knows his rights. As a result, the police hate them and the black community admires them. But the law has changed; they no longer carry arms even if they speak of them often, quoting Mao dreaming of obtaining power through guns and justice through power. The Black Panther Party are not anarchists we believe in government for the People. In the Black community we want government to serve the people, we gonna first start with *[inaudible]*...They killed brother Bobby Hutton, shot Brother Eldridge Cleaver, shot Brother Warren Wells, arrested Brother David Hilliard our National Captain of the Black Panther Party, they are making it their business through the process of arresting me and my wife, through the process of arresting numerous Panthers on the block... the Oakland.

