

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

David Hilliard

David Hilliard was one of the founding members of the Black Panther Party.

Well, we didn't accept America as our country. As a matter of fact, we said that the entire world is our—is our country. That we have—we're in alliance with all people of the world. And we saw this war as being an unjust criminal war. And that the majority of the people uh were against this war. That this was a very unpopular war, and we didn't see that we were being unAmerican by trying to bring an end to it. That it was unAmerican to uh unleash the kind of genocide and uh—and uh—uh mass murder that was being launched against the Vietnamese people. I think some, I don't know, six million or so, maybe died during that—that Vietnam War. But uh we saw ourselves as being in the spirit of Americanism and patriotism by trying to save the lives who in—in the main were our young black men going over to fight the Vietnamese, someone we say who never even called them nigger.

Did you have a lot of African-American males coming to your headquarters trying to get out of the draft or trying to get out of the military? We had a lot of—lot of African-American male—males who—male who were from the war, who—from Vietnam. They came home and came directly to our Black Panther Party, because that was uh—uh an education for them to be in Vietnam and—and to be there, and to be connected with our movement.

