

Student Handout
Oakland Museum of California
What's Going On? California and the Vietnam Era
Lesson Plan #1
From the Quiet Decade to Social Revolution:
How the Vietnam War Transformed California

Oral History
Tom Smothers

Tom Smothers is one half of the Smothers Brothers comedy team. The Smothers Brothers' Comedy Hour was one of the top rated television programs through 1968 when it was suddenly canceled, supposedly because of its highly political and radical content.

Maybe, uh, growing up in the ... the Cold War area [sic] ... era, I was ... I was so unpolitical, I was ... cared nothing about anything that was going on during the Fifties, in the McCarthy era, I didn't have any idea, only in hindsight did I look back and see it. There could have been a possibility that we were so frightened by the ... the threat of war and the nuclear weapons and everything, that when we go into Vietnam and this is another one of the big Communist bloc things that are coming at us and they're all connected, uh, might have encouraged support for the war in ... in the beginning.

