

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
Bruce Weigel

Bruce Weigel is a Vietnam veteran of the First Air Cavalry and a poet.

Uh, and, and somehow maybe the women understand the need for that kind of nurturing at that moment, so it was my mother and my grandmother that really did more for me coming back than anyone else. That's a story that still hasn't been told, uh, fully enough, because that was a whole almost another war for a lot of returning soldiers. America, depending on when you came back, America did not want to hear about the war. People did not want to hear about the war. Um, not only that, by '68 and '69 people were beginning to say that we lost the war, so there was this double, uh, X over our experience. Not only had we lost the war, but we carried the story inside of us about something very ... strange that had happened. Not just to us, but to all of us, that no one wanted to hear about. Uh ... and, you know, that was hard. I joined the anti-war movement when I first came back, and even those people were very, uh ... they thought we were dubious for a while. They were very suspicious of our motivations, which you know, in retrospect is crazy, because who better to say, "Don't do this" than the combatants?

