

Special Collections and
University Archives

UMass Amherst Libraries 

David Entin Papers

1966-1997 (*Bulk:* 1966-1968)

1 box (0.5 linear ft.)

Call no.: MS 876



[About SCUA](#)

[SCUA home](#)

[Credo digital](#)

[Scope](#)

[Inventory](#)

[Admin info](#)

[Download](#)

[xml version](#)

[print version \(pdf\)](#)



[Read collection overview](#)

A worker in the struggle against poverty and racism for five decades, David Entin was raised in New York City environs until his family moved to Jacksonville, Florida in 1953 when he was twelve years old. He began his anti-poverty work with the North Carolina volunteers, a pioneering early effort where he worked with low-income families in Durham, NC. David then joined the North Carolina Fund, a statewide Ford Foundation project where he helped develop and wrote the first rural anti-poverty program under the new Economic Opportunity Act for Craven County (New Bern), NC. From there he helped start the initial anti-poverty program in Jacksonville. His new career was interrupted by Vietnam War service with the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). Stationed in Quang Ngai Province, a Vietcong stronghold, and Da Nang between 1966 and 1968, Entin oversaw redevelopment projects and while not caught up in the fight itself, he was charged with assessing damage in Region One following the Tet Offensive. After returning home to Florida, Entin resumed his antipoverty work.

A richly evocative collection of 51 letters, the David Entin collection reflects the experiences of a USAID employee stationed in South Vietnam during the war years of 1966 to 1968. Addressed to his parents, these letters function as a sort of diary, recording Entin's daily activities and observations. They are accompanied by hundreds of slides and photographs taken during the period and by a series of later autobiographical essays, detailing Entin's childhood, early career, and service in Vietnam.

See similar SCUA collections:

Asia

Photographs

Vietnam War

Background on David Entin

David Entin was born in Jackson Heights, Queens, New York and lived in the New York City area until his family moved to Jacksonville, Florida when he was twelve. Adjusting to the realities of life in the South was a challenge for a young New Yorker just entering his teenage years. Academically, he discovered that seventh grade in Florida was considered a part of the primary school system, meaning that he reverted back to a one teacher-one classroom model, and he soon discovered that the quality of instruction was far inferior to what he had known up north. Culturally, the adjustments were even more challenging. Segregation, in particular, proved difficult for Entin to grasp, and the pervasive religious homogeneity was nearly as perplexing. In New York, his suburban home was located in a Jewish enclave set amid an array of Protestant and Catholic blocks, whereas Jacksonville was nearly uniformly Baptist. For Entin, segregation and religious conformity came to signify a general close-mindedness that he found increasingly difficult to accept. From that point on, a commitment to civil rights and economic justice became central parts of his life.



Photograph of two Vietnamese children take by Entin, ca. 1967.

After graduating from Princeton University in 1962, David entered graduate school at the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill, earning a master's in American History. His thesis was on Angelo Herndon, an African American Communist arrested in the South for circulating "seditious literature." Twice in the 1930s the U.S. Supreme Court threw out the cases against Herndon. With the rise of the civil rights movement David became more interested in trying to influence history than write about it. He was planning to join the Mississippi Summer campaign in 1964, but instead joined his girl friend (later wife) Audrey Bunce, in signing up for the North Carolina Volunteers, a pioneering state anti-poverty program financed by the Ford Foundation.

David was one of four volunteers assigned to the Durham County Welfare Department to work intensively with ten very poor families, half African-American and half white. These volunteers tutored the children in basic reading and mathematics and brought them to plays and swimming pools, seeking to broaden their horizons. When the summer ended, Entin and Bunce were recruited by the North Carolina Fund to be Community Action Technicians for a year. They were sent to rural Craven County in the eastern part of the state, where 40% of the population was below the national poverty level. They worked to develop the first rural Community Action Program in the United States under Lyndon Johnson's Economic Opportunity Act. The program David wrote was one of the first six Community Actions Programs announced by President Johnson in November, 1964. He also wrote the first rural Head Start and Neighborhood Youth Corps programs. With a couple of million federal dollars now flowing into this small, rural county, their anti-poverty agency became the largest employer in the area, fostering both civil rights for African-Americans and government programs to aid the less fortunate. Not surprisingly, local opposition and hostility surfaced and led to threats on their lives, a resurgence of the Ku Klux Klan and even the bombing of an agency car one night. The agenda Director was fired and replaced by former Klansman. Entin left the program and returned to Jacksonville to help start and develop the anti-poverty program there.

In 1966, Entin set aside his new career for service in the Vietnam War. Not keen on the war or becoming a soldier, he enlisted instead in the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), which offered a better fit to his skills and ethics. Stationed in Quang Ngai province, a Viet Cong stronghold, he oversaw a variety of projects in rural reconstruction and development, providing supplies to rural hamlets and assisting generally in rebuilding from the fallout of war. Late in 1967, he was appointed Reports Officer for Region One, based in Da Nang, where he was responsible for compiling reports on the impact of military operations. Although not directly caught up in the Tet Offensive, his experiences documenting the devastation that

solidified his already strong opposition to the war.

After returning home to Jacksonville later in 1968, Entin spent several months running his father's business, but when approached to become head of the city's newly-formed Community Relations Commission, he jumped at the chance. The Commission was an effort to improve race relations and build support for the government within the African American community, and Entin set about attempting to improve employment and housing opportunities for African Americans and developed a plan for school integration.

After leading state-level anti-poverty programs in Massachusetts from 1973 to 1983, Entin returned to graduate study in Sociology at Boston University, earning a doctorate in 1987 for *Missions of Antipoverty Organizations: Change and Survival*. While completing his degree, he embarked on a new career as an academic administrator in higher education, eventually becoming Vice President for Academic Affairs at Holyoke Community College. David Entin retired in June 2006 and lives in a co-housing complex in Northampton.

Scope of collection

A richly evocative collection of 51 letters, the David Entin collection reflects the experiences of a USAID employee stationed in South Vietnam during the war years of 1966 to 1968. Addressed to his parents, these letters function as a sort of diary, recording Entin's daily activities and observations. They are accompanied by hundreds of slides and photographs taken during the period and by a series of later autobiographical essays, detailing Entin's childhood, early career, and service in Vietnam.

During his first six months in Vietnam, Entin regularly recorded the new experiences each day offered, whether attending a school opening, traveling via helicopter to nearby districts to deliver supplies, or meeting with supervisors to assess projects and programs in need of USAID support. Although his work was consistently challenging, he remained essentially optimistic about his work and its impact.

By the end of his first year in Vietnam, however, Entin's outlook began to change. Early in December 1967, he did his best to explain the complexity of the war to his parents, saying that he saw no easy solutions to the problems faced by the Vietnamese people, and he wrote how discouraged he had become by the ineffectiveness of the U.S. government efforts. When he learned later that month of a proposal to merge the government's civilian programs, including USAID, OSA, and USIS, Entin was initially encouraged, but he quickly became disenchanted after learning that the military was to be placed in charge. Concerned about what might lie ahead, he entertained the idea of leaving.

Although the correspondence from 1968 is comparatively sparse, Entin's letters document an eventful final few months in Vietnam. At the start of the year, Entin accompanied Ted Kennedy during a series of visits to hospitals and refugee camps, wondering all the time about the senator's motivations for touring the Vietnamese provinces. His suspicions turned darker a few weeks later when the Tet Offensive broke over the cities and countryside. Even though he was not in the country during the attacks, Entin returned shortly after to witness the immediate aftermath, dedicating an entire letter to the tragedy that befell the former Imperial City of Hue. He criticized the inaccurate reporting on the campaign and the willingness of the American military, politicians, and media to maintain the illusion that progress was being made.

Inventory

Articles and printed material

1965-2003

Box 2: 1

Articles and reviews

1996-2002

Box 2: 2

Articles and writings: Vietnam

1968-1997

Box 2: 3

Articles: about Entin, David

1966-1998

Box 2: 4

The Center for Quality Management Journal

1993-1994

Box 2: 5

Context (Wentworth Institute of Technology)

1990-1991

Box 2: 6

Craven Operation Progress, Inc.

1965-1966

Box 2: 7

Diary

1966 July-Sept

Box 1: 1

Essays

1997-2015

Box 1: 2

Greater Jackson Economic Opportunity (GJEO)

1969-1971

Box 2: 8

Jacksonville (Fla.): reports, clippings, printed material

1968-1971

Box 2: 9

Letters

1966 July-Dec

Box 1: 3

Letters

1967 Jan-Nov

Box 1: 4

Letters

1968 Jan-Apr

Box 1: 5

Letters

1972, 1992

Box 2: 10

Newspaper articles and editorials

2001-2003

Box 2: 11

The Other Forum: Exploration in Teaching and Learning (HCC)

2007

Box 2: 12

Report: "Academic Affairs Accomplishments" (HCC)

2005

Box 2: 13

Reports and Correspondence

1966-1967

Box 1: 6

Reports and Correspondence

1967-1968

Box 1: 7

Reports and Correspondence

1968

Box 1: 8

Resume

ca. 2005

Box 2: 14

Photographs: Vietnam

ca.1967

Box 1: 9

Photographs not taken by Entin, but likely take by a photographer hired by the U.S. government.

Photographs: Vietnam

ca.1967

Box 1: 10

Photographs not taken by Entin, but likely take by a photographer hired by the U.S. government.

Photographs: Vietnam

ca.1967

Box 1: 11

Photographs not taken by Entin, but likely take by a photographer hired by the U.S. government.

Photographs: Vietnam

ca.1967

Box 1: 12

Photographs not taken by Entin, but likely take by a photographer hired by the U.S. government.

Photographs: Vietnam

ca.1967

Box 1: 13

Photographs not taken by Entin, but likely take by a photographer hired by the U.S. government.

Photographs: Vietnam

ca.1967

Box 1: 14

Photographs not taken by Entin, but likely take by a photographer hired by the U.S. government.

Photographs: Vietnam

1967

Box 1: 15

Photographs not taken by Entin, but likely take by a photographer hired by the U.S. government.

Photographs: Vietnam

ca.1967

Box 1: 16

Photographs not taken by Entin, but likely take by a photographer hired by the U.S. government.

Photographs: Vietnam

ca.1967

Box 1: 17

Photographs not taken by Entin, but likely take by a photographer hired by the U.S. government.

"School Desegregation Since Swann: A Case Study"

1973

Box 2: 15

Slides: Quang Ngai, Vietnam

ca.1967

Box 1: 18

Slides taken by Entin.

Slides: Quang Ngai, Vietnam

ca.1967

Box 1: 19

Slides taken by Entin.

Slides: Quang Ngai, Vietnam

ca.1967

Box 1: 20

Slides taken by Entin.

Slides: Hue, Vietnam

1967-1968

Box 1: 21

Slides taken by Entin.

Slides: Danang, Vietnam

1967 Feb

Box 1: 22

Slides taken by Entin.

Slides: Saigon, Vietnam

1966-1968

Box 1: 23

Slides taken by Entin.

Working papers, New England Resource Center for Higher Education (UMass Boston)

1992-1994

Box 2: 16

Administrative information

Access

The collection is open for research.

Provenance

Acquired from David Entin, 2015.

Processing Information

Processed by Rachel Purington, 2016.

Language:

English

Acknowledgments

Digitization of selected materials was made possible by a grant from the Massachusetts State Historical Records Advisory Board and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

Copyright and Use (More information)

Cite as: David Entin Papers (MS 876). Special Collections and University Archives, University of Massachusetts Amherst Libraries.

Search terms

Subjects

Economic assistance, American--Vietnam

Technical assistance, American--Vietnam

Tet Offensive, 1968

United States. Agency for International Development

Vietnam War, 1961-1975--Children--Photographs

Vietnam War, 1961-1975--Civilian relief

Vietnam War, 1961-1975--Personal narratives

Contributors

Entin, David Hudson [main entry]

Entin, David Hudson

Genres and formats

Color slides

Photographs

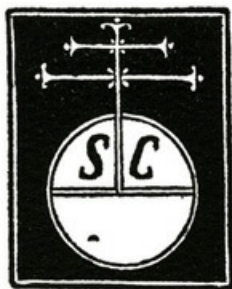
Slides (Photographs)

Link to similar SCUA collections

Asia

Photographs

Vietnam War



Special Collections & University Archives

University Libraries : UMass Amherst

154 Hicks Way : Amherst, Mass. 01003-9275

Ph. 413-545-7282 (545-SCUA)



2020Site PoliciesAccessibility