



Ford Foundation records, National Affairs Division, Office Files of George Esser

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Rockefeller Archive Center

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Summary Information

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| Repository: | Rockefeller Archive Center |
| Creator - aut: | Esser, George H., Jr., 1921-2006 |
| Creator: | Ford Foundation |
| Title: | Ford Foundation records, National Affairs Division, Office Files of George Esser |
| ID: | FA1553 |
| Date [inclusive]: | 1967-1972 |
| Physical Description: | 5.64 Cubic Feet 12 Hollinger boxes |
| Language of the Material: | English |

Preferred Citation

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Biographical / Historical

The Ford Foundation was chartered by Henry and Edsel Ford in 1936 "to receive and administer funds for scientific, educational and charitable purposes, all for the public welfare", and initially served the Ford family's charitable interests in the Detroit area. Following the deaths of Edsel Ford (1943) and Henry Ford (1947), the Foundation was propelled to the forefront of philanthropy as the largest American foundation in terms of both endowment and yearly expenditures, and with an international scope to its major program areas. During the Foundation's first twenty years its major programs were in international economic development, primary and higher education, educational and public broadcasting, behavioral sciences, civil liberties, urban development, fine arts and the humanities. The Ford Foundation also partnered with the Rockefeller Foundation in supporting agricultural development in South America, Africa, and Southeast Asia. Since the 1970s, the Foundation has also pioneered programs in women's rights, energy policy, micro-financing in under-developed countries, establishing human rights groups, and improving international HIV/AIDS education.

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Biographical / Historical

George H. Esser, Jr. (1921-2006) was a civil rights advocate and foundation program officer. Between the late 1960s and early 1970s, he served as Program Advisor for the South within the Ford Foundation's National Affairs Division. During his time at the Foundation, he advised various community, philanthropic, academic, and state and local government organizations working in and aiding the South. He chiefly supported projects and initiatives related to housing, rural and urban economic development, African American voting rights and political participation, and public policy education.

Esser earned a law degree from Harvard University. Prior to joining the Ford Foundation, he served as Director of the North Carolina Fund, an anti-poverty program supported by the Ford Foundation. After he left the Ford Foundation in 1972, he became Executive Director of the Southern Regional Council.

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Scope and Contents

Collection contains the office files of Ford Foundation Program Advisor George Esser. Esser served as Program Advisor for the South in the Foundation's National Affairs Division between the late 1960s and early 1970s. The collection is comprised of two types of records housed within two separate series. The first series contains Esser's subject files, while the second contains his correspondence files.

Esser's subject files were created to document his work with the different community, philanthropic, academic, and state and local government organizations he advised in the southern states of America. They generally regard specific proposals, projects, and activities. His correspondence files were created to document his communications with individuals associated with those different types of organizations over two different time spans: 1970-1972 and 1968-1970. The correspondence they contain is arranged alphabetically by the names of Esser's correspondents.

In addition to correspondence, material formats such as memos, reports, proposals, meeting agendas and minutes, brochures, publications, and newspaper clippings are prevalent throughout the collection. Records concern subjects like housing, rural and urban economic development, poverty, racial discrimination, African American voting rights and political participation, and public policy education. The support provided by Program Assistant Lucy Waktins and Program Officer Bryant George to Esser's activities is documented throughout the collection.

The collection is comprised of more than one transfer of George Esser office files made to the RAC. Records from a 2018 Ford Foundation records, Special Collections Accession (2018:017) were added to

the later 2019 Ford Foundation records, Staff Subject Files, George Esser Accession (2019:076) in order to complete the set of correspondence files contained in Series 2.

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Arrangement

Collection consists of two series.

Subject files in Series 1 originate entirely from the 2019:076 Accession of George Esser office files, and correspondence files in Series 2 originate from both the 2019:076 Accession and the 2018:017, Ford Foundation records, Special Collections Accession. Material in the Correspondence files series is organized alphabetically by the names of the correspondents. This alphabetical system of arrangement revealed an obvious point where the files from 2018:017 continued the run of correspondence files contained in 2019:076. The 2018:017 materials were therefore added to where the materials from 2019:076 ended.

Collection arrangement is as follows:

Series 1. Subject files, 1967-1972

Series 2. Correspondence files, 1968-1972

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Administrative Information

Publication Statement

Rockefeller Archive Center

15 Dayton Avenue

Sleepy Hollow 10591

archive@rockarch.org

URL: <http://www.rockarch.org>

Conditions Governing Access

Open for research. Brittle or damaged items are available at the discretion of RAC.

Conditions Governing Use

RAC users must abide by all applicable provisions of United States copyright law. Reproduction/duplication of archival items is routinely provided in accordance with "fair use". If the RAC does not hold copyright for an archival collection, or items within a collection, it is the users responsibility to contact the copyright holder, or make a fair effort to do so, prior to publication.

Immediate Source of Acquisition

Ford Foundation archive was deposited at the RAC in 2011. Ford Foundation records, correspondence, reports, program files, and officers' papers were transferred to and accessioned by the RAC beginning in 2011.

This material was transferred to the RAC in two different set of records in 2018 and 2019. One box of material was ingested by the RAC in 2018 as part of Accession 2018:017, Ford Foundation records, Special Collections. The rest of the material was ingested by the RAC in 2019 as Accession 2019:076, Ford Foundation records, Staff Subject Files, George Esser. Accessions continue as necessary.

Processing Information

Collection materials originated from two different sets of records transferred to the Rockefeller Archive Center: Accession 2018:017 Ford Foundation records, Special Collections and Accession 2019:076 Ford Foundation records, Staff Subject Files, George Esser. Analysis of the records' content revealed that the documents were all the office files of George Esser, and the discovery of an alphabetical arrangement scheme carrying over from the 2018:017 Accession to some of the files in the 2019:076 Accession further proved the common origin of the documents. It was therefore decided to process the records from the two accessions into a single collection in respect of the arrangement scheme binding the files together.

Processing Level 3: Standard Processing

Processed by Darren Young, November 2019

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Controlled Access Headings

- Ford Foundation
- African Americans
- Community development, Urban
- Political participation
- Political rights
- Rural development

- Southern States
- Urban policy

Collection Inventory

Subject files, 1967-1972

Physical Description: 3.41 Cubic Feet About 7.25 LGL size Hollinger boxes

Scope and Contents

Series consists of the subject files George Esser created during his time as the Ford Foundation's Program Advisor for the South. Esser's subject files document his work with different community organizations, social advocacy groups, foundations, universities, research institutions, and state and local government organizations working in and aiding the southern states of America. They include material formats like correspondence, memos, reports, proposals, meeting agendas and minutes, brochures, publications, and newspaper clippings. One file also contains a few photographs.

Esser advised organizations like the Delta Foundation which sought to support rural economic development, different state chapters of the Voter Education Project (VEP) which each sought to protect African Americans voting rights and promote voter education, the American Society for Public Administration (ASPA) which sought to strengthen the public administration community through education and training, and, in addition to many others, the University of Miami, Coral Gables which received a grant from the Ford Foundation for research and action programs on urban problems.

| Title/Description | Instances | |
|---|-----------|--------------|
| Delta Opportunities Corporation (DOC), Greenville, Mississippi, 1969-1970 | box 1 | folder 1 |
| Delta Foundation, Greenville, Mississippi, 1967-1971 | box 1 | folder 2-4 |
| Hancock County Committee for Social and Economic Development - Director Ronald Parker and Vice President John McCown, 1969-1972 | box 1 | folder 5 |
| Georgia Council on Human Relations - Executive Director John McCown, 1970 | box 1 | folder 6 |
| Mississippi Action for Community Education (MACE), Greenville, Mississippi, 1970 | box 1 | folder 7 |
| Mississippi Action for Community Education (MACE), Greenville, Mississippi - Director Ed Charles Brown, 1970 | box 1 | folder 8 |
| Mississippi Action for Community Education (MACE) Wood Products Company - Ed Charles Brown, 1969 | box 1 | folder 9 |
| Arkansas Voter Education Project (AVEP), 1969-1971 | box 1 | folder 10 |
| North Carolina Voter Education Project (NCVEP), 1971 | box 2 | folder 11-12 |
| South Carolina Voter Education Project (SCVEP), 1971 | box 2 | folder 13 |

| | | |
|---|-------|-----------|
| Louisiana Voter Education Project - Public Affairs Service Center, 1970-1971 | box 2 | folder 14 |
|---|-------|-----------|

Scope and Contents

Photographs in the file are of the Public Affairs Seminar on black officials at Southern University in Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

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|--|-------|--------------|
| Voter Education Project (VEP), 1971-1972 | box 2 | folder 15 |
| Voter Education Project (VEP), 1971 | box 2 | folder 16 |
| Voter Education Project (VEP), 1970-1971 | box 2 | folder 17 |
| American Society for Public Administration (ASPA), 1970-1972 | box 2 | folder 18-19 |
| American Society for Public Administration (ASPA) - National Academy of Public Administration (NAPA), 1969-1970 | box 3 | folder 20-21 |
| National Academy of Public Administration (NAPA) - Delphi exercise on "Developments Affecting the Public Service, 1971-1980", 1971-1972 | box 3 | folder 22 |
| National Academy of Public Administration (NAPA), 1970-1971 | box 2 | folder 23-24 |
| National Academy of Public Administration (NAPA), 1968-1970 | box 3 | folder 25-27 |
| National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and Administration (NASPAA) - Urban Administration Fellows Program, 1971 | box 4 | folder 28 |
| Urban Administration Fellows Program - National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and Administration (NASPAA) Meeting, Boulder, Colorado, 1971 | box 4 | folder 29 |
| American Society for Public Administration (ASPA) - National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and Administration (NASPAA) Minority Fellowship Program, 1970-1971 | box 4 | folder 30 |
| Comprehensive Health Services, Inc., Beaufort, South Carolina - Thomas Barnwell, 1970-1971 | box 4 | folder 31 |
| Mechanics and Farmers Bank, Durham, North Carolina - J.H. Wheeler, 1970-1971 | box 4 | folder 32 |
| Mechanics and Farmers Bank, Durham, North Carolina, 1970-1971 | box 4 | folder 33 |
| Georgia State University, undated | box 4 | folder 34 |
| Center for Public Service Manpower - Harry Kranz and Associates, Bethesda, Maryland, 1970 | box 4 | folder 35 |
| Center for Community Change - A Feasibility and Planning Project for a Coordinated Economic, Technical Assistance, and Advocacy System in the South, Richard W. Boone, 1969-1970 | box 4 | folder 36 |
| Proposal for Corrections Legal Services Program at the University of South Carolina School of Law, Webster Myers, 1971 | box 4 | folder 37 |

| | | |
|--|-------|--------------|
| Center for Urban Studies, University of Miami, Coral Gables, Florida, 1970 | box 4 | folder 38 |
| Duke University, Durham, North Carolina - Strategies for Improved Legislative Effectiveness by the States proposal, Joel Fleishman, Allan Kornberg, and Tom Naylor, 1971 | box 4 | folder 39 |
| Housing Opportunities Made Equal (HOME), Raleigh, North Carolina - John J. Ingle, Jr., 1968-1971 | box 4 | folder 40 |
| Federal Executive Institute (FEI), Jim Clark/Southeast Alabama Self-Help Association (SEASHA), John Brown, 1971 | box 4 | folder 41 |
| University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Department of City and Regional Planning, 1970-1971 | box 4 | folder 42 |
| South Carolina State Housing Authority (SCSHA), 1971 | box 4 | folder 43 |
| National Committee for Industrial Mission (NCIM), Detroit, Michigan - Hugh C. White, Jr., 1969 | box 5 | folder 44 |
| University of Dayton proposal, Curtis Hicks, 1971-1972 | box 5 | folder 45 |
| Duke University, Durham, North Carolina Fifth Circuit Desegregation Project proposal - Frank T. Read, 1971-1972 | box 5 | folder 46 |
| Federal Executive Institute (FEI), Charlottesville, Virginia, 1970-1972 | box 5 | folder 47 |
| Institute of Politics (IOP) - James Chubbuck, 1968-1972 | box 5 | folder 48-50 |
| Center for Urban Studies, University of Miami, Coral Gables, Florida, 1969-1970 | box 5 | folder 51 |
| Center for Urban Studies, University of Miami, Coral Gables, Florida - Reports, 1968-1970 | box 5 | folder 52 |
| Center for Urban Studies, University of Miami, Coral Gables, Florida, 1967-1971 | box 6 | folder 53-58 |
| Southwest Center for Urban Research (SCUR), University of Houston and Rice University, 1970-1972 | box 7 | folder 59-60 |
| Urban and Regional Development Center, Vanderbilt University, Nashville Tennessee, 1971 | box 7 | folder 61 |
| National Area Development Institute (NADI), 1970-1972 | box 7 | folder 62-65 |
| National Area Development Institute (NADI) Council Meeting, Shakertown, Kentucky, 1970-1971 | box 8 | folder 66 |
| National Area Development Institute (NADI), 1969-1971 | box 8 | folder 67 |
| National Area Development Institute (NADI) - Spindletop Research, Inc., Lexington, Kentucky, 1970 | box 8 | folder 68 |
| National Area Development Institute (NADI) Council Meeting, Lexington, Kentucky, 1970 | box 8 | folder 69 |
| Spindletop Research, Inc., Lexington, Kentucky, 1969-1970 | box 8 | folder 70-72 |

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Correspondence files, 1968-1972

Physical Description: 2.24 Cubic Feet About 4.75 LGL size Hollinger boxes

Scope and Contents

Series consists of the correspondence files George Esser created during his time as the Ford Foundation's Program Advisor for the South. Correspondence in the files is organized alphabetically by the names of Esser's correspondents. There are two alphabetical runs of files within the series. The first run contains correspondence that originates from the years 1970 to 1972, while the second run contains correspondence that originates from the years 1968 to 1970. No attempts were made during the processing of the collection to chronologically arrange the alphabetical correspondence file runs.

Correspondence in the series documents George Esser's communications with individuals associated with community organizations, social advocacy groups, foundations, universities, research institutions, and state and local governments working in and aiding the southern states of America. There is also some correspondence between Esser and other Ford Foundation staff members. Esser's correspondence concerns project proposals, invitations and follow up conversations to meetings, workshops and conferences, and a paper Esser was preparing with Bryant George about the Ford Foundation's strategy for the South.

Files in the series originate from two different transfers of George Esser office files made to the RAC. The two groups of records were organized into the same series in order to restore the alphabetical arrangement of the correspondence files.

| Title/Description | Instances | |
|---|-----------|--------------|
| Correspondence - A, 1970-1972 | box 8 | folder 73 |
| Correspondence - B, 1970-1972 | box 9 | folder 74-76 |
| Correspondence - C, 1970-1972 | box 9 | folder 77 |
| Correspondence - Leslie Dunbar (Thomas Cooney), 1971 December 20 | box 9 | folder 78 |

Scope and Contents

Original folder was labeled "Cooney".

| | | |
|-------------------------------|--------|-----------|
| Correspondence - D, 1970-1972 | box 9 | folder 79 |
| Correspondence - E, 1971-1972 | box 9 | folder 80 |
| Correspondence - F, 1970-1971 | box 9 | folder 81 |
| Correspondence - G, 1970-1971 | box 9 | folder 82 |
| Correspondence - H, 1970-1972 | box 10 | folder 83 |
| Correspondence - J, 1971-1972 | box 10 | folder 84 |
| Correspondence - K, 1971-1972 | box 10 | folder 85 |
| Correspondence - L, 1970-1972 | box 10 | folder 86 |
| Correspondence - M, 1969-1971 | | |

| | | |
|---|--------|------------|
| | box 10 | folder 87 |
| Correspondence - N, 1970-1971 | box 10 | folder 88 |
| Correspondence - O, 1970-1972 | box 10 | folder 89 |
| Correspondence - P, 1970-1972 | box 10 | folder 90 |
| Correspondence - R, 1970-1972 | box 10 | folder 91 |
| Correspondence - S, 1970-1972 | box 10 | folder 92 |
| Correspondence - T, 1970-1972 | box 10 | folder 93 |
| Correspondence - U and V, 1971-1972 | box 10 | folder 94 |
| Correspondence - W, 1969-1972 | box 11 | folder 95 |
| Correspondence - Y and Z, 1970-1972 | box 11 | folder 96 |
| Correspondence - A, 1969-1970 | box 11 | folder 97 |
| Correspondence - B, 1969-1970 | box 11 | folder 98 |
| Correspondence - C, 1969-1970 | box 11 | folder 99 |
| Correspondence - D, 1969-1970 | box 11 | folder 100 |
| Correspondence - E, 1969-1970 | box 11 | folder 101 |
| Correspondence - F, 1968-1970 | box 11 | folder 102 |
| Correspondence - G, 1969-1970 | box 11 | folder 103 |
| Correspondence - H, 1968-1970 | box 11 | folder 104 |
| Correspondence - I, 1969 | box 11 | folder 105 |
| Correspondence - J, 1969-1970 | box 11 | folder 106 |
| Correspondence - K, 1969-1970 | box 11 | folder 107 |
| Correspondence - L, 1968-1970 | box 11 | folder 108 |
| Correspondence - M, 1968-1970 | box 12 | folder 109 |
| Correspondence - N, 1969-1970 | box 12 | folder 110 |
| Correspondence - O, 1970 | box 12 | folder 111 |
| Correspondence - P, 1969-1970 | box 12 | folder 112 |
| Correspondence - R, 1969-1970 | box 12 | folder 113 |
| Correspondence - S, 1969-1970 | box 12 | folder 114 |
| Correspondence - T, 1969-1970 | box 12 | folder 115 |
| Correspondence - U, V, and W, 1969-1970 | box 12 | folder 116 |
| Correspondence - Z, 1968-1970 | box 12 | folder 117 |

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