



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

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Summary Information

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

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Conditions Governing Access

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

Conditions Governing Use

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.

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

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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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