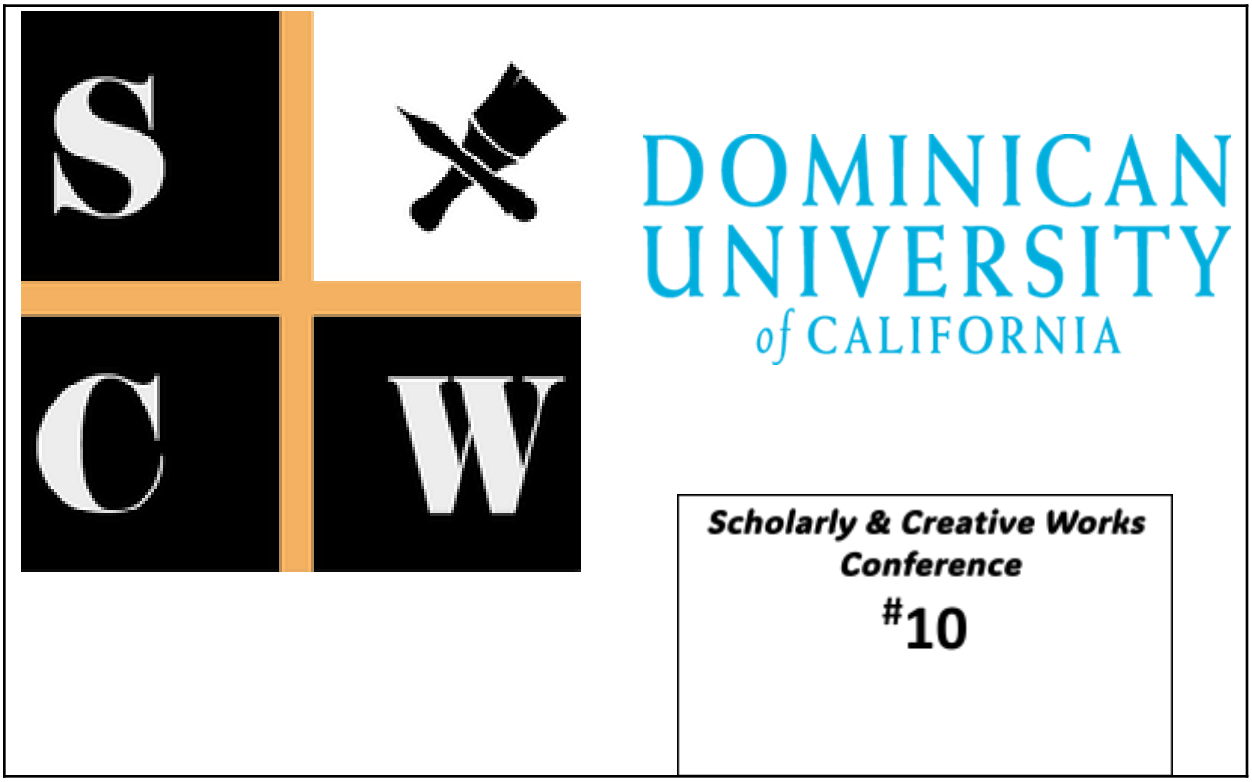


Presenter: De'Andre Brown Jr

Session & Time: Oral_II / 1:20 to 1:40pm

Room: Guzman 110

Discipline: History

Faculty Mentor: Jordan Lieser

ZOO link: https://us05web.zoom.us/j/84964660990?pwd=1wa6n6OAJ5SctuLhXdYYbX5j9Rqbjx.1
ZOOM Passcode: DUC

Digital Portfolio URL:

Title: The Black Panther Party: From Militancy to Social Activism

Abstract:

This research project examines the ways in which the Black Panther Party (BPP) was negatively portrayed by the media and targeted by the government from the moment of the organization's inception in 1966. The BPP's shift in rhetoric style from militancy to social activism is emphasized by examining the organization's "survival" programs, such as the Free Breakfast Programs, Free Health Clinics, and Education Programs, and their impact on black communities around the country. Past scholarly opinions about the BPP were driven by a fear from white America toward the organization's aggressive style of protest and social activism. The government looked to disparage the image of what it meant to be a Black Panther. In his own words, J. Edgar Hoover, the former director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), believed the BPP to be "the greatest threat to internal security of the country." The U.S. government actively harassed and arrested

members of the organization in an attempt to make the organization look bad to the public. Contrary to what the government believed about the BPP, the organization looked to do nothing but protect and help black communities through education and community service programs. These findings indicate that the Black Panther Party was never truly a militant organization, but an organization that looked to help black people through their own institutions such as community schools, health clinics, and food programs. This paper utilizes historiographical research and archival sources from the Bay Area Television Archive, UC Berkeley Library and The Black Panther Party Community News Service to examine the various ways the government actively targeted and harassed the Black Panther Party.