Finding aid to the John R. Hall research materials on Peoples Temple, MS 3803

Finding aid prepared by Denice Stephenson.
California Historical Society
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2007
Title: John R. Hall research materials on Peoples Temple
Date (inclusive): 1954-2003
Date (bulk): 1978-2003
Collection Identifier: MS 3803
Creator: Hall, John R.
Physical Description: 38 boxes
Contributing Institution: California Historical Society
678 Mission Street
San Francisco, CA, 94105-4014
(415) 357-1848
reference@calhist.org
URL: http://www.californiahistoricalsociety.org/
Restrictions on Access
Collection is open for research, with the following exceptions: Boxes 2-3, folders 25-67 are restricted. Inquiries concerning these files should be directed to the Director of Library and Archives.
Preferred Citation
[Identification of item], John R. Hall Research Materials on Peoples Temple, MS 3803, California Historical Society.
Separated Materials
Photographs have been transferred to the Photography Collection (MSP 3803). Printed materials have been transferred to the book collection.
Related Archival Materials
Related collections include: Peoples Temple records (MSP 3800); FBI Collection of Peoples Temple papers from Jonestown, Guyana (MS 3801); Moore Family papers (MS 3802); Ross E. Case collection on Peoples Temple (MS 4062); Margaret T. Singer materials on Peoples Temple (MS 4123); Peoples Temple ephemera and publications (MS 4124); Clippings on Peoples Temple (MS 4125); Peoples Temple miscellany collection (MS 4126).
Immediate Source of Acquisition
The John R. Hall research materials on Peoples Temple were given to the California Historical Society by John R. Hall in February 1987. Additions were made in March 2004.
Arrangement
The collection has been divided into four series: Series 1: Manuscript materials; Series 2: Reports; Series 3: Newspaper clippings; and Series 4: Audiotapes.
Biographical Information
John R. Hall is the author of Gone from the promised land: Jonestown in American cultural history. He is a professor in the Sociology Department at the University of California, Davis.
History of Peoples Temple
Peoples Temple began as an independent Pentecostal church founded by Jim and Marceline Jones in Indianapolis, Indiana in 1955 and became affiliated with the Disciples of Christ denomination in 1960. In 1965, the church moved to Northern California with approximately a hundred members. In 1970, Peoples Temple began holding services and recruiting thousands of members from African American communities in San Francisco and Los Angeles and later opened large churches in both cities. In 1973, the church initiated plans for an agricultural and rural development mission in Guyana, South America that became known as Jonestown. In 1977, media coverage of Peoples Temple practices and political activities led the government to investigate the church’s financial and social welfare programs. That same year, members began to relocate to Jonestown, and by 1978 over 1000 resided there. In November 1978, responding to claims of mistreatment of members in Jonestown, Rep. Leo Ryan, accompanied by a small group, went to Guyana to survey the conditions. During the visit, 17 members chose to leave with Ryan. On November 18, when boarding their planes, they were shot by Peoples Temple members, killing Ryan, three journalists, and a Peoples Temple member. Later that same day, over 900 members of Peoples Temple died in Jonestown of cyanide poisoning. Survivors included eighty members in Guyana and hundreds of members in the U.S., many in California. In 1983, Peoples Temple was dissolved and its records were deposited at the California Historical Society.
Scope and Contents

**Additional Collection Guides**

The legacy finding aid attached to this record may not accurately reflect the contents of the collection. Additional materials may have been added to the collection and container locations may have changed since the description was written.

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**Indexing Terms**

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the library's online public access catalog:

- Jones, Jim, 1931-1978.
- Peoples Temple--History.
- Collective settlements--Social aspects.
- Collective settlements--Sociological aspects.
- Jonestown (Guyana)--History.
- Audiotapes.