Finding aid to Peoples Temple miscellany, 1951-2013, MS 4126

Finding aid prepared by Frances Wratten Kaplan  
California Historical Society  
2011  
678 Mission Street  
San Francisco, CA 94105  
reference@calhist.org  
URL: http://californiahistoricalsociety.org/
Contributing Institution: California Historical Society
Title: Peoples Temple miscellany
Identifier/Call Number: MS 4126
Physical Description: 17.0 boxes
Date (inclusive): 1951-2013
Collection is stored onsite.
Language of Material: Collection materials are in English.
Abstract: Peoples Temple miscellany consists of miscellaneous materials about Peoples Temple arranged by California Historical Society staff into a single, ongoing collection. Acquired at different times from a variety of donors, materials in the collection include correspondence, notes, scrapbooks, journals, clippings, publications, audio recordings, realia and television documentaries about Peoples Temple and Jonestown, its agricultural mission in Guyana.
Access
Collection is open for research.
Publication Rights
All requests to reproduce, publish, quote from or otherwise use collection materials must be submitted in writing to the Director of the Library and Archives, North Baker Research Library, California Historical Society, 678 Mission Street, San Francisco, CA 94105. Consent is given on behalf of the California Historical Society as the owner of the physical items and is not intended to include or imply permission from the copyright owner. Such permission must be obtained from the copyright owner. Restrictions also apply to digital representations of the original materials. Use of digital files is restricted to research and educational purposes.
Preferred Citation
[Identification of item], Peoples Temple miscellany, MS 4126, California Historical Society
Separated Materials
Photographs have been removed and transferred to Photographs from Peoples Temple miscellany, 1966-1978, MSP 4126.
Related Collections
Manuscript Collections:
Peoples Temple records, 1922-1984, MS 3800
Federal Bureau of Investigation collection of Peoples Temple papers from Jonestown, Guyana, 1931-1978, MS 3801
Moore family papers, 1968-1988, MS 3802
John R. Hall research materials on Peoples Temple, 1954-2003, MS 3803
Ross E. Case collection pertaining to Peoples Temple, 1961-1984, MS 4062
Margaret T. Singer materials on Peoples Temple, 1956-1998, MS 4123
Peoples Temple ephemera and publications, 1959-1979, MS 4124
Newspaper clippings on Peoples Temple: photocopies, 1953-1978, MS 4125
Photography Collections:
Photographs from Peoples Temple miscellany, 1966-1978, MSP 4126
Photographs from Peoples Temple records, 1941-1983, MSP 3800
Photographs of Peoples Temple in the United States and Guyana, 1967-1978, PC 010
Acquisition Information
Materials in Peoples Temple miscellany have been acquired at different times from a variety of donors. Most of the materials in the collection were donated to the California Historical Society by surviving members of Peoples Temple, their families, and friends. Other materials were received from members of the general public and various media and production companies.
Accruals
Additions to the collection are expected.
System of Arrangement
Peoples Temple miscellany is arranged in 8 series: Series 1: Members’ and families’ papers; Series 2: Miscellaneous records and papers; Series 3: FBI releases; Series 4: Jonestown memorials; Series 5: Television, film and audio recordings; Series 6: Realia; Series 7: Ephemera; Series 8: Publications.
The arrangement of the collection was imposed by California Historical Society staff.

**History of Peoples Temple**

Peoples Temple began as a church founded by Jim and Marceline Jones and a small group of parishioners in Indianapolis in 1955. As pastor, Jim Jones preached to a racially-integrated congregation during Pentecostal-based services that included healings and sermons on integration and class conflicts. Peoples Temple conducted food drives; opened a “free restaurant” that served thousands of meals to the city’s poor in the early 1960s; operated nursing homes; and hosted weekly television and radio programs featuring their integrated choir. The church became well known in the Indianapolis press for the members’ integration activities and for their assertions of their pastor’s gifts as a healer. The church became affiliated with the Disciples of Christ denomination in 1960.

In the summer of 1965, the Jones family and approximately one hundred Peoples Temple members relocated to Redwood Valley, a rural community eight miles north of Ukiah in Mendocino County. Peoples Temple conducted church services and meetings in rented and borrowed spaces until 1969 when they finished building their own church with a swimming pool, an animal shelter, gardens, and a community kitchen. By this time, the church’s membership had grown to three hundred.

In 1970, Jim Jones began to preach in cities throughout California. Recruiting drives in African American communities in San Francisco and Los Angeles increased Peoples Temple membership to over twenty-five hundred by 1973. Some members lived in communal housing and worked full time for Peoples Temple. Others contributed significant portions of their income and property to the church. The church’s operations included real estate management; home care facilities for seniors and youths; publishing and bookkeeping services; mail order services; and maintenance of a fleet of buses to transport members to services throughout the state and across the country. Tens of thousands of people, including politicians and members of other congregations, attended Peoples Temple services between 1970 and 1977.

The leadership of Peoples Temple voted to establish an agricultural and rural development mission in Guyana, South America in the fall of 1973. Over the next two years, members traveled to Guyana to scout a location for the mission; establish a residence in Georgetown, the capital of Guyana; clear the land; and begin construction at the site. The building plans for the community which became known as Jonestown included farm buildings, a large communal kitchen, medical facilities, schools, dormitory-style housing, small cabins, a day care center and a large open-air pavilion that became the community’s central meeting place.

By 1976, Peoples Temple had moved its headquarters from Redwood Valley to San Francisco and had become involved in citywide electoral politics. They published their own newspaper, *Peoples Forum*; staged rallies and events for local and national political figures; and were vocal in their support of causes such as freedom of the press, affirmative action, and gay rights. In the fall of 1976, recently elected Mayor George Moscone appointed Jim Jones to the San Francisco Housing Authority. Jones served as its chairman until he left for Guyana the following year.

In 1977, former members and relatives organized a group called the Concerned Relatives to protest Jones’s treatment of church members. Child custody issues and living conditions in Jonestown were at the center of the conflict between Peoples Temple and the Concerned Relatives. Both sides filed lawsuits, sought public support through the media, and appealed to government officials for protection. Media coverage of Peoples Temple practices and political activities led the government to investigate the church’s financial and social welfare programs. Peoples Temple began to close many of their businesses, sell their properties, and relocate hundreds of their members to Guyana.

In response to issues raised by the media and former members, California Congressman Leo Ryan scheduled a trip to Jonestown in November 1978. By this time, more than a thousand Peoples Temple members were living in Guyana. His staff, members of Concerned Relatives, Embassy officials, and journalists accompanied Ryan on an overnight visit to Jonestown. As the congressional party left for the airstrip at Port Kaituma, sixteen disaffected Jonestown residents accompanied Ryan. As the group boarded two small airplanes at the airstrip, Peoples Temple members drove up on tractors and began shooting. They killed Ryan, three journalists, and a Peoples Temple member. That same day, November 18, 1978, more than nine hundred people died, most by cyanide poisoning, in Jonestown; four other members died in Georgetown.

More than eighty Peoples Temple members survived the deaths in Guyana: people who lived through the airstrip shootings; Jonestown residents who left the community before and during the poisonings; and members who were in Georgetown and on boats. Hundreds of Peoples Temple members had remained in the U.S., many of them in California.

**Scope and Contents**

Peoples Temple miscellany consists of miscellaneous materials about Peoples Temple arranged by California Historical Society staff into a single, ongoing collection. Acquired at different times from a variety of donors, materials in the collection include correspondence, notes, scrapbooks, journals, clippings, publications, audio recordings, realia, and television documentaries. The collection includes records pertaining to individual members of Peoples Temple, the activities of the church, life in Jonestown, and the aftermath of the events of November 18, 1978.
Materials in Series 1, Members’ and families’ papers, were received from surviving members of Peoples Temple or from families and friends of members who died in Jonestown. Records in this series include an unpublished college paper by the son of a former member; stories and artwork created by children of Peoples Temple members; letters between Guyanese and U.S. embassy staff and parents seeking information about their children in Jonestown; and some of Jim Jones’ personal papers, including newspaper clippings, academic records, and certificates.

Series 2, Miscellaneous records and papers, consists of miscellaneous records created by or concerning Peoples Temple or associated organizations and individuals. Records in this series includes high school journal writings by children of Peoples Temple members who attended Opportunity High School in San Francisco; papers from a theatrical production about Peoples Temple; personal correspondence between the American and Guyanese lawyers for Peoples Temple; lists of supply orders from Jonestown transmitted by radio to the headquarters of Peoples Temple in San Francisco; Bible teaching materials created by Peoples Temple members; and a signed petition to Congressman Leo Ryan opposing his visit to Jonestown.

Series 3, FBI releases, consists of three compact discs obtained from the FBI by the California Historical Society under the auspices of the Freedom of Information Act. The CDs contain information regarding the FBI’s investigation into the murder of Congressman Leo Ryan on November 18, 1978.

The records in Series 4, Jonestown memorials, concern various installations and events planned, designed, or created to memorialize those who died in Jonestown. Records in this series include donation forms for a planned Jonestown Memorial Wall at Evergreen Cemetery in Oakland, California, ephemera and reviews of Laura Baird’s art installations about Peoples Temple, Jonestown Carpet and Jonestown Dead, and a 30th anniversary reading of the names of all those who died on November 18, 1978.

Series 5, Television, film, and audio recordings, consists of Peoples Temple choir recordings of He's Able, the album produced in 1973 at Brotherhood Records in San Francisco, and video tapes and DVDs of television documentaries produced after the events of 1978. The series also includes a feature film, video-taped news and press conference footage, and ephemera and articles relating to the 2006 documentary Jonestown: The Life and Death of Peoples Temple.

Series 6, Realia, consists of objects created or used by Peoples Temple members. Objects include a choir robe worn by Jim Jones, a wooden crate made to transport materials between the United States and Guyana, and a wooden sign engraved with the name of Dr. Laurence Schacht, head of the medical clinic in Jonestown. Other objects were used to raise funds for Peoples Temple and include a handmade candle sold through the Peoples Temple mail-order department, as well as toys and jewelry created in Jonestown and meant for sale to help support the settlement.

Series 7, Ephemera, consists of ephemera about Peoples Temple created by other sources. This series contains a set of Cult of Death trading cards published by Carnage Press in 1988.

Series 8, Publications, is made up of published articles and newsletters about Jonestown and Peoples Temple.

Processing Information
The collection was re-processed by Frances Wratten Kaplan in 2011.

Subjects and Indexing Terms
Audiocassettes
Jonestown (Guyana)
Jonestown Mass Suicide, Jonestown, Guyana, 1978
Phonograph records.
Scrapbooks
Video recordings.
Jones, Jim, 1931-1978
Peoples Temple.
Ryan, Leo J.--Assassination.

Box 1, Members’ and families’ papers Series 1: 1951-2011
Folders 1-12,
Boxes 3-4, Box 11
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box 1, Folder 1</th>
<th>Marceline Jones' correspondence to Joy Scala and other papers 1975-2006</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Scope and Contents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Collection of letters from Marceline Jones to Joy Scala, an adoption placement worker for the Marion County adoption system in Indiana. Also includes clippings collected by Scala about Peoples Temple and Jonestown.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box 1, Folder 2</th>
<th>Peoples Temple children's stories</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Scope and Contents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Stories and drawings produced by the children of Peoples Temple members.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box 1, Folder 3, Box 11</th>
<th>Grunnet family papers 1978</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Scope and Contents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Includes correspondence and artwork by Pat Grunnet.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Existence and Location of Copies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Copies of Pat Grunnet's correspondence to her brother Bob are in pdf format on compact disc in box 11 of the collection.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box 11</th>
<th>Patti Chastain Haag art images from Speed of Light exhibition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Physical Description: 1 compact disc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Scope and Contents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Art images produced by Patti Chastain Haag for her exhibition Speed of Light.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box 1, Folder 4</th>
<th>Chuck Kirkendoll papers 1979</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Box 1, Folder 5</td>
<td>William Sheldon Oliver and Tanya Rena Cox Garcia marriage license, Guyana 1977</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box 1, Folders 6-9</td>
<td>Sines family papers 1972-2011 (bulk, 1972-1979)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Scope and Contents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Includes correspondence from Nancy and Ron Sines, Peoples Temple members living in Jonestown, to their parents Barbara and Paul Sines. Also includes letters to Barbara and Paul Sines from the U.S. Embassy in Guyana, and newspaper clippings concerning Peoples Temple and Jonestown.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Boxes 3-4</th>
<th>Jim Jones papers 1951-1968</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Scope and Contents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Consists of two scrapbooks, containing mostly newspaper clippings collected by Jones; Jones' personal papers and some correspondence; his California teaching credential; and a copy of his academic record from Indiana University.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box 1, Folder 10</th>
<th>Laura Johnston [Kohl] papers 1977-1979</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Scope and Contents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Includes letters to Laura Johnston from Deborah Touchette and the United States Department of State; letters from the United States Embassy in Guyana to Mrs. Virginia Reid, Laura Johnston's mother; and a memorial flyer for Barbara Faye Hoyer, a Peoples Temple member who died in Jonestown on November 18, 1978.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box 1, Folder 11</th>
<th>Lewis family papers 1981-2010</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Scope and Contents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Includes correspondence, notes, and an unpublished student paper by Chris Lewis, Jr.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box 1, Folder 12</th>
<th>Grace Stoen notary public certificate 1975</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Box 2, Folders 1-6, Box 5</td>
<td>Miscellaneous records and papers Series 2: 1956-2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box 2, Folder 9</td>
<td>Slain in the Spirit theatrical production papers 1995</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Box 5

**Petition to Leo Ryan from Peoples Temple members protesting his visit to Jonestown 1978**

Petition is oversized and is located in the handmade wooden trunk (box 9).

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Box 2, Folder 1

**Supply orders from Jonestown 1978**

Box 2, Folder 2

**State of California Franchise Tax Board correspondence 1978**

Box 2, Folder 3

**Lionel Luckhoo correspondence with Charles Garry 1977**

**Scope and Contents**

Personal letter from Lionel Luckhoo of Luckhoo & Luckhoo Legal Practitioners, the Guyana-based law firm retained by Jim Jones to represent Peoples Temple interests in Guyana, to Charles Garry, the U.S.-based lawyer for Peoples Temples. The letter discusses Luckhoo's work and writings and Charles Garry's biography. Contains a reference to their "mutual client".

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Box 2, Folder 4

**Bible study papers 1956-1957, 2005**

**Scope and Contents**

Consists of teaching notes and lesson plans for Bible study classes taught by Harold Cordell at a Bible college created by Peoples Temple. Also includes a flyer, *The Open Door*, produced by Peoples Temple, promoting their services and radio broadcasts. The April 1956, vol. 1, no. 4, issue lists William Branham as a special speaker.

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Box 2, Folder 5

**Opportunity High School papers 1976-1977, 2005**

**Scope and Contents**

Consists of student writings from *In Small Dreams*, a publication of the creative writing class of Opportunity High School in San Francisco, December 13, 1976.

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Box 2, Folder 6

**Guyana Council of Churches papers 1978**

Box 11

**FBI releases Series 3:**

Box 11

**Freedom of Information Act releases**

**Scope and Contents**

Series of three compact discs received from the FBI. The contents are part of the FBI's investigation into the assassination of Leo Ryan.

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Box 2, Folders 7-8, 17, Box 15, Folder 4

**Series 4: Jonestown memorials 1981-2018**

Box 2, Folder 7

**Jonestown Memorial Wall, Oakland 1993**

Box 2, Folder 8

**Laura Baird: Jonestown Carpet and Jonestown Dead installations 1981-1994**

Box 2, Folder 17

**The Mary Pearl Willis Foundation 2008**

**Scope and Contents**

Consists of papers about *Speaking Their Names*, a memorial to those who died in Jonestown on November 18, 1978. Organized by Lela Howard, founder and president of the Mary Pearl Willis Foundation, the memorial included a congressional reading of the names of the dead, as well as other events that commemorated the 30th anniversary of the deaths in Guyana.

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Box 15, Folder 4

**Jonestown Memorial programs 2011-2018**

**Scope and Contents**

Includes programs for the following memorial events: the service of dedication for the Jonestown Memorial, Evergreen Cemetery (2011 May 29); the fortieth anniversary service, Evergreen Cemetery (1978 November 18); and the fortieth anniversary homecoming service in the Fillmore (2018 November 18).
Box 2, Folder 10, 
Boxes 10-11, 
Box 14

Television, film, and audio recordings Series 5: 1973-2008

Box 10

He’s Able, by the Peoples Temple choir 1973
Physical Description: 1 phonograph record

Box 11

He’s Able, by the Peoples Temple choir 1973
Physical Description: 1 compact disc

Box 2, Folder 10

Jonestown: The Life and Death of Peoples Temple papers 2006

Purple Haze, television documentary directed by Mary Anne Alton 2001
Physical Description: 1 video tape

Box 11

Outside the Lines - Jonestown: The Game of Their Lives, television segment from ESPN 2007
Physical Description: 1 video tape

Box 11

Most Evil: Cult Followers, television documentary by Optomen Productions, season 2, episode 5, 2007
Physical Description: 1 DVD

Box 11

Witness to Jonestown, television documentary by MSNBC 2008
Physical Description: 1 video tape

Box 11

Escape from Jonestown, television documentary by CNN 2008
Physical Description: 2 compact discs

Box 14

Jim Jones and Peoples Temple documentaries, undated
Physical Description: 1 video tape

Box 14

NBC raw footage and The Onliest One Alive undated
Physical Description: 1 video tape

Box 14

Purple Haze and The Tragedy of Jonestown, television documentaries 1998
Physical Description: 1 video tape

Box 14

Jonestown: Mystery of a Massacre, television documentary by A 1998
Physical Description: 1 video tape

Box 14

Guyana: Cult of the Damned, movie 1979
Physical Description: 1 video tape

Box 14

Jim Jones: Journey into Madness, television documentary by A 1996
Physical Description: 1 video tape

Box 14

Jimmy Carter press conference 30 November 1978
Physical Description: 1 video tape

Box 14

Children of Jonestown undated
Physical Description: 1 video tape

Box 14

Jonestown: Time and Again, NBC news coverage of Jonestown undated
Physical Description: 1 video tape
Box 14

**The Sensational 70s: 1978**, television documentary 1980

Physical Description: 1 video tape

Box 14

**Guyana Tragedy: The Jim Jones Story**, television movie directed by William A. Graham 1980

Physical Description: 2 video tapes

Box 2, Folders 11-13, Boxes 6-9, 12-13, 16-17

**Realia Series: 1973-2005**

Box 6

Brooch and necklace made in Jonestown; Fla-Vor-Aid packet circa 1973-1978

Box 2, Folder 11

Cottage industries sign circa 1973-1978

Box 7

Anointed candle 1973

Box 2, Folder 12

Anointed candle flyer and description 1973, 2005

Box 8

Choir robe worn by Jim Jones undated

Box 9

Handmade wooden trunk circa 1973-1978

Box 12

Laurence Schacht medical clinic sign circa 1973-1978

Acquisition Information

Gift of Derek A. Braithwaite: "In memory of the children whose cheerful spirits, joy and laughter were abruptly stilled at Jonestown on November 18, 1978."

Box 2, Folder 13

Laurence Schacht medical clinic sign documentation 20 November 2008

Scope and Contents

Consists of a letter written by Derek A. Braithwaite to the California Historical Society detailing the circumstances surrounding the removal of the medical clinic sign from Jonestown.

Boxes 13, 16-17

Wooden toys made in Jonestown circa 1973-1978

Box 2, Folder 16

**Ephemera Series: 1988**

Scope and Contents

The materials in this series include ephemera about Peoples Temple. For ephemera produced by Peoples Temple, see Peoples Temple Ephemera and Publications, MS 4124.

Box 2, Folder 16

**Cult of Death** set of trading cards from Carnage Press 1988

Box 15, Folders 1-3, Box 2, Folders 14-15

**Publications Series: 1978-2013**

Scope and Contents

The materials in this series include publications about Peoples Temple. For publications created by Peoples Temple, see Peoples Temple Ephemera and Publications, MS 4124.

Box 2, Folder 14

Magazine and journal articles 1979-2005

"Songs Primarily in the Key of Life" by Brian Kevin, *Colorado Review*, Vol. 37.2, Summer, 2010

Box 2, Folder 15

**Jonestown Report 2006-2013**

Scope and Contents

An annual publication edited by Fielding M. McGehee III and Rikke Wettendorff that provides primary source information and updates on ongoing research about Peoples Temple.
Box 15, Folder 2  
**DisciplesWorld November 2008**  
*Scope and Contents*  
November 2008 issue (volume 7, issue 9) of *DisciplesWorld*, a journal produced by the Christian organization, Disciples of Christ. This issue, dedicated to reports and stories on Peoples Temple, was published on the 30th anniversary of the deaths in Jonestown and Guyana.

Box 15, Folder 3  
*Scope and Contents*  

Box 15, Folder 5  
**Who died prototypes, compiled by Kathryn Barbour, and order form 2012, 2014**