Alice Martin Papers

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**Alice Martin Papers**

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**Contact Information**

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Processed by:  
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Date Completed:  
2008  
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**Descriptive Summary**

**Title:** Alice Martin Papers  
**Date (inclusive):** 1937-2004  
**Date (bulk):** (bulk 1943-1993)  
**Collection number:** MS 122  
**Creator:** Martin, Alice, circa 1907-2004  
**Extent:** 8 boxes  
**Languages:**  
English  
**Repository:** Special Collections, Robert E. Kennedy Library  
California Polytechnic State University  
San Luis Obispo, California 93407

**Abstract:** The personal papers of Alice Martin, a civic-minded African-American woman known for her charitable nature and community service, consists primarily of correspondence, employment and war records, photographs, and realia. Donated by the estate of Alice Martin in 2004. Martin dedicated her time to her church, affordable housing consortiums, and community services for the economically disadvantaged and elderly in the county of San Luis Obispo. She was among the black family members who came to the area in the early 1940s as their husbands or other relatives were stationed at Camp San Luis Obispo, a training base for the U. S. Army.

Visit: [http://digital.lib.calpoly.edu/rekl-martin-ms122](http://digital.lib.calpoly.edu/rekl-martin-ms122)

**Provenance**

Donated by the estate of Alice Martin in 2004.

**Restrictions on Access**
Collection is open to qualified researchers by appointment only. For more information on access policies and to obtain a copy of the Researcher Registration form, please visit the Special Collections Access page.

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**Preferred Citation**

Alice Martin Papers, Special Collections, California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo, Calif.

**Biography**

Alice Mae Martin, an African American and native of Illinois, came to San Luis Obispo, California, in 1942 with her then husband Clarence F. Martin while he was stationed at Camp San Luis Obispo. Following his deployment she moved back to her home base in Montana. She returned to live in San Luis Obispo permanently in 1969.

Martin worked most of her adult life, well into her 70s. During her early working years, she served as a mechanical helper/aircraft fitter and a laundry presser for the U. S. War Department at military camps in Montana and Arizona during World War II. When her husband was transferred to California, she joined him, working at Camp Roberts in Monterey Co., then locally at Camp San Luis Obispo, as a presser. Later on, she operated the steam presses at Paul’s Cleaners, a retail dry cleaners still in business today on South Higuera St. Included in the collection is the original apron she wore as part of her work uniform there. She also held jobs as a nanny and housekeeper.

Details of her birth are unconfirmed and among the records in the collection are her queries attempting to establish details about her birthplace and year of birth (variously stated as 1907 and 1912).

She was known for her charitable nature and the donation of hours of community service to her church; affordable housing consortiums; and services for the economically disadvantaged and elderly in the city of San Luis Obispo. She volunteered for many organizations including Retired Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP), the Housing Authority, the Boy Scouts, Grace Church, the Red Cross, and the Salvation Army.

A strong advocate of affordable housing, she served as a Commissioner for the Housing Authority for the City of San Luis Obispo for many years. Martin received much recognition for her contributions, most notably on the eve of her 97th birthday when the SLO County Community Foundation honored her for more than 10,000 hours of community service to the City of San Luis Obispo. This honor exemplified her life of service to her church, neighbors, friends, and community.

Martin had only a sixth-grade education, but read extensively, and was an ardent poet. She died in San Luis Obispo, September 11, 2004, at 97 years of age.

**Sources**


**Scope and Content Note**

Personal papers of Alice Martin, a civic-minded woman of color known for her charitable nature and donation of hours of community service. Consists of her writings, war records, photographs and personal papers.

She dedicated her time to her church, affordable housing consortiums, and services for the economically disadvantaged and elderly in the City of San Luis Obispo. She was among the many black families who came to the city of San Luis Obispo in the early 1940s, whose husbands or relatives were training at Camp San Luis.

Where possible, the provenance, or original organization, of the papers has been preserved. However, in order to simplify access to the collection for researchers, some materials in specific formats and topics were reorganized and refoldered to more accurately reflect their contents.

The Alice Martin Papers are divided into 5 series:

1. Personal Papers, 1937-2004
2. Volunteer Activities, 1971-2004
3. Writings, 1951-1988
4. Photographs, undated
5. Artifacts, undated
The Alice Martin Papers are housed in 8 document boxes with Series 1 - 3 containing the most extensive and unique portions of the collection, which include her World War II civilian service records, volunteer activities and her writings.

**Indexing Terms**

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

**Subjects**

- African Americans -- California -- San Luis Obispo -- Social conditions.
- Community life -- California -- San Luis Obispo -- History -- 20th century.
- Political activists -- California -- San Luis Obispo -- History -- 20th century.
- Volunteer workers in social service -- San Luis Obispo -- California.
- Martin, Alice Mae -- 1907-2004
- Martin, Clarence Franklin--1922-

**Genre and Forms of Materials**

- Correspondence
- Photographs
- Family papers
- Realia
- Typescripts
- Military papers
- Newspaper clippings
- Poetry

**Related Material**

**Materials Cataloged Separately**


[Inscribed by Clarence Martin to wife Alice Martin.]

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**1. Personal Papers 1937-2004**

**Scope and Content Note**


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**A. Personal Records**

**Scope and Content Note**

Contains Alice Martin's birth, memorial, cemetery records and membership records. Arranged chronologically by date, from 1968-2004. 4 folders.

- Box 1, Folder 1
  - Birth records, 1968-1993
- Box 1, Folder 2
  - Cemetery plot records, 1969-1984
- Box 1, Folder 3
  - Identification cards and memberships, 1972-1987
- Box 1, Folder 4
  - Memorial materials, 2004

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**B. Employment records**

**Scope and Content Note**

Contains Alice Martin's World War II civilian employment and post war employment records. Arranged chronologically by date, from 1943-1964. 2 folders.
1. Personal Papers 1937-2004

B. Employment records

Box 1, Folder 5
Box 1, Folder 6

Alice Martin, World War II civilian employment records, 1943-1946
Alice Martin, Labor and post-war employment records, 1959-1964

C. Education records

Scope and Content Note
Contains Alice Martin’s correspondence for educational training. Arranged chronologically by date, 1955. 1 folder.

Box 1, Folder 7

Northwest Radio & Television, 1955

D. Church Materials

Scope and Content Note
Contains sermons, writings, and programs belonging to Alice Martin. Arranged chronologically, from 1966-1993. 2 folders.

Box 1, Folder 8
Box 1, Folder 9

Sermons and writings, 1966-1993
Programs, 1983-1985

E. Address Books

Scope and Content Note
Contains Alice Martin’s personal address books, undated. 1 folder.

Box 1, Folder 10

Address Books

F. Pension and Retirement

Scope and Content Note
Contains Alice Martin’s retirement and pension correspondence. Arranged chronologically, from 1951-1987. 2 folders.

Box 1, Folder 11
Box 1, Folder 12

Correspondence, Civil Service Net, 1951-1979
Correspondence, Pension, 1959-1987

G. General Correspondence

Scope and Content Note
Contains Alice Martin’s personal correspondence and correspondence documenting her efforts to have her poetry published. Arranged chronologically, from 1947-2004. 3 folders.

Box 1, Folder 13
Box 1, Folder 14
Box 1, Folder 15

Correspondence, Poetry Publication, 1962-1979
Correspondence, Personal, 1947-2003
Correspondence, Cards and letters, 1977-2004

H. Recipes

Scope and Content Note
Contains Alice Martin’s personal and bound recipes, undated. 1 folder.

Box 1, Folder 16

Recipes, undated

I. Photographs

Scope and Content Note
Contains photographs of Alice Martin, undated. 2 folders.
1. Personal Papers 1937-2004

I. Photographs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box 2, Folder 1</th>
<th>Photographs, Alice Martin</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Box 2, Folder 2</td>
<td>Alice Martin with friends</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

J. Clippings

Scope and Content Note
Contains clippings and articles from local newspapers about the history of African Americans on the Central Coast. Arranged chronologically, from 1981-2004. 2 folders.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box 2, Folder 3</th>
<th>Clippings about Alice Martin, 1985-2004</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Box 2, Folder 4</td>
<td>Clippings and photocopies, local history, 1981-1983</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

K. Personal Files of Clarence Martin

Scope and Content Note
Contains Clarence Martin's employment and service records during World War II, as well as parole records. Arranged chronologically, from 1937-1944. 2 folders.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box 2, Folder 5</th>
<th>World War II Employment and Service records, 1941-1944</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Box 2, Folder 6</td>
<td>Parole records 1937</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. Volunteer Activities 1971-2004

Scope and Content Note
Contains nine subseries: A. Area Agency on Aging, B. Atascadero State Hospital, C. Economic Opportunity Commission (EOC), D. Help Hospitalized Vets, E. Housing Authority of the City of San Luis Obispo, F. Retired Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP), G. Young Men's Christian Association, San Luis Obispo (YMCA), H. Consumer Advocacy, and I. Plaques and Awards.

A. Area Agency on Aging

Scope and Content Note

| Box 3, Folder 1 | Area Agency on Aging, printed awards and correspondence, 1977-1992 |

B. Atascadero State Hospital

Scope and Content Note
Contains awards and newsletters, undated. 1 folder.

| Box 3, Folder 2 | Atascadero State Hospital, printed awards and newsletters |

C. Economic Opportunity Commission (EOC)

Scope and Content Note
Contains printed awards, correspondence photographs, arranged chronologically, from 1990-1993. 2 folders.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box 3, Folder 3</th>
<th>EOC, printed awards and correspondence, 1990-1993</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Box 3, Folder 4</td>
<td>EOC, Photographs, 1990</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

D. Help Hospitalized Vets

Scope and Content Note

| Box 3, Folder 5 | Help Hospitalized Vets, printed awards, 2003-2004 |
E. Housing Authority of the City of San Luis Obispo

Scope and Content Note

Box 3, Folder 6
Housing Authority, printed awards and newsletters, 1984-2003

Box 3, Folder 7
Housing Authority, photographs undated

F. Retired Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP)

Scope and Content Note
Contains printed awards and correspondence, undated. 1 folder.

Box 3, Folder 8
RSVP, printed awards and correspondence undated

G. Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) and San Luis Obispo County Agencies

Scope and Content Note
Contains printed awards from the YMCA and other county agencies. Arranged chronologically, from 1974-2004. 2 folders.

Box 3, Folder 9
YMCA, printed awards, 1974-1976

Box 3, Folder 10
San Luis Obispo County printed awards, 1974-2004

H. Consumer Advocacy Correspondence

Scope and Content Note
Contains correspondence to and from California politicians and draft letters to the editor. Arranged chronologically, from 1971-1989. 3 folders.

Box 3, Folder 11
Correspondence, Alan Cranston, 1971

Box 3, Folder 12
Correspondence, Leon Panetta, 1980-1989

Box 3, Folder 13
Draft letters to the Editor, undated

I. Plaques and Awards

Scope and Content Note
Contains awards and plaques. Arranged by format of material, from 1990-2003. 5 items.

Box 4, Folder 0
EOC, Volunteer of the Year, 1990

Box 4, Folder 0
RSVP, Isabel Lierman-Regina Rohde Award, 2000-2001

Box 4, Folder 0
Housing Authority of City of SLO, Outstanding Service Award, 2003

Box 4, Folder 0
Nominee for Intergenerational Effort of the Year, 1991

Box 4, Folder 0
SLO County Community Foundation, Salute to Volunteers, undated

3. Writings 1951-1988

Scope and Content Note
Contains 3 subseries: A. Poetry, B. Speeches, and C. Notebooks.

A. Poetry

Scope and Content Note
Contains typescripts and handwritten poetry authored by Alice Martin. Arranged in original order, from 1951-1988. 8 folders.
### Writings 1951-1988

#### A. Poetry

| Box 5, Folder 1 | "Words of Comfort", by Alice Martin, undated |
| Box 5, Folder 2 | Typescripts, 1951-1972 |
| Box 5, Folder 3 | List of poems, undated |
| Box 5, Folder 4 | Poetry, Dated, 1951-1988 |
| Box 5, Folder 5 | Poetry, undated |
| Box 5, Folder 6 | Poetry, undated |
| Box 5, Folder 7 | Poetry, undated |
| Box 5, Folder 8 | Poetry, undated |

#### B. Speeches

Scope and Content Note

| Box 6, Folder 1 | What the YMCA and RSVP Mean to Me, undated |
| Box 6, Folder 2 | A Volunteering Senior for the RSVP-Speaking Out!, 1974 |
| Box 6, Folder 3 | A Short Reading For Our Mission Society, 1980 |
| Box 6, Folder 4 | RSVP Duties and What it Means to Me, undated |
| Box 6, Folder 5 | Outline, 1978 |
| Box 6, Folder 6 | Thinking Deep, undated |
| Box 6, Folder 7 | The Beautiful Story of the Late Mahalia Jackson, undated |
| Box 6, Folder 8 | A Quote from our Negro Paper-The Omaha Star..., undated |
| Box 6, Folder 9 | In Memory of the Late Rev. Martin Luther King Jr., undated |
| Box 6, Folder 10 | Tribute to the Late Former Pres. Lyndon Baines Johnson, undated |
| Box 6, Folder 11 | Five Dark Days in the History of the Late Martin Luther King Jr., undated |

#### C. Notebooks

Scope and Content Note
Contains notebooks and commonplace writing compiled and authored by Alice Martin. Arranged in original order, undated. 2 folders.

| Box 6, Folder 12 | "Final Outfittings" notebook, undated |
| Box 6, Folder 13 | Commonplace Writing, undated |

#### 4. Photographs

Undated
Contains 1 subseries: A. Unidentified friends and acquaintances.

#### 5. Artifacts

Undated
Contains 1 subseries: A. Coin purses and Apron.
5. Artifacts undated
   A. Coin purses and apron

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box 8, Folder 0</th>
<th>Coin purses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Apron</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>