

Barbara C. Moore Correspondence MS-0539

Shawna Bishop

Special Collections & University Archives

5500 Campanile Dr. MC 8050

San Diego, CA 92182-8050

askscua@sdsu.edu

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Contributing Institution: Special Collections & University Archives

Title: Barbara C. Moore Correspondence

Creator: Moore, Barbara C.

Identifier/Call Number: MS-0539

Physical Description: 2.52 Linear Feet

Date (inclusive): 1968-1999

Language of Material: English .

Scope and Contents

The *Barbara C. Moore Correspondence* (1968-1999) collection contains correspondence from Barbara Moore to her daughter Rebecca Moore beginning when Rebecca ("Becky") left home to attend college and continuing throughout the following three decades. The collection also contains letters from Barbara to Pat Clary (Rebecca's first husband) while he was in the Vietnam War, as well as a few letters from John Moore (Rebecca's father) to Rebecca, and numerous letters and greeting cards from Barbara to her brother Robert. Other items in the collection include photographs of Barbara and family members, newspaper clippings, copies of John's sermons sent to Rebecca, and greeting cards sent for a variety of occasions. The collection consists of three series: Correspondence (1964-2002), Greeting Cards, and Photographs.

Series one, Correspondence (1964-2002), contains the main correspondence from Barbara, organized chronologically by date. Each folder within this series is dedicated to a year and is organized by month and day within. Some letters have an approximate year, which is indicated on the letter itself using brackets and a question mark (for example: [1980?]). There are two subseries: Letters, Year Unknown, which consists of letters that had no identifying year, and Letters from Barbara Moore to her brother, Robert A. Covington, and his wife, Mary Covington. The folders for the former are organized alphabetically by letter recipient. These letters are mainly to Rebecca and Fielding McGehee III ("Mac", Becky's second husband) but there are some addressed to Becky and Pat, as well as to Pat alone while he was in the Vietnam war. The second of the two sub-series is mainly comprised of letters and greeting cards from Barbara to her brother and sister-in-law, Robert and Mary Covington.

The Greeting Cards series contains greeting cards that did not accompany a letter. The majority of the cards are simply signed by Barbara and John, with a few containing longer messages within. Letters that accompanied greeting cards can be found in series one.

The Photographs series contains photographs of family members and Barbara. Each picture has been labeled on the back with the known information. Other photographs that accompanied letters can be found in series one.

Arrangement Note

I. Barbara C. Moore Correspondence, (1968-1999)

1. Letters, Year Unknown

2. Letters from Barbara Moore to her brother, Robert A. Moore, and his wife, Mary Covington

II. Greeting Cards

III. Photographs

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Related Materials

Rebecca Moore Papers, 1951-2013

Preferred Citation

Identification of item, folder title, box number, *Barbara C. Moore Correspondence*, Special Collections and University Archives, San Diego State University Library.

Biographical Note

Barbara Covington (later Moore) was born on June 7, 1922, in Glendale, CA. Barbara attended Pasadena Junior College in the 1940s. In 1942, Barbara met John Moore through mutual friends and the two married six months later. Barbara and John had three daughters: Carolyn, born July 1945; Rebecca born February 1951; and Ann, born May 1954, along with several failed pregnancies. The family moved around the west coast in order to follow John's career as a Methodist Pastor. In the 1970s, Carolyn and Annie both joined Peoples Temple and became prominent members. Carolyn, Annie, and Barbara's 3-year-old grandson Jim-John all died in the tragedy of Jonestown, Guyana in 1978. Her surviving daughter, Rebecca, was a professor of religious studies at San Diego State University from 1999 until her retirement in 2015. Rebecca has dedicated much of her career to the study of Peoples Temple. Barbara was an active member of the Methodist Church and the community throughout her life. She devoted herself to helping the less fortunate by taking in runaway youths and becoming a prominent member of the homeless organization "Loaves and Fishes," among many other community activities. Barbara died on June 21, 2004.

Accruals

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Subjects and Indexing Terms

Jonestown Mass Suicide, Jonestown, Guyana, 1978--Sources

Peoples Temple--History--Sources

Jones, Jim, 1931-1978

Correspondence I

box 1, folder 1

Correspondence- 1968 Folder 1

Scope and Contents

10 letters from Barbara Moore to Rebecca "Becky" Moore while Becky was away at college. Letters contain information about family and friends that were back in Davis, CA, as well as information about the work that Barbara and John were performing for the church and community. (Residence- Davis)

box 1, folder 2

Correspondence- 1969 Folder 2

Scope and Contents

20 letters containing information about peace marches that Becky participated in, as well as Barbara's concern for Becky's safety while on campus. Barbara discusses President Nixon and there are some newspaper clippings that correlate. Some letters briefly mention Jim Jones and the family's struggle to accept Carolyn's new life. Also in this folder are some unrelated newspaper clippings, a letter from John (Becky's father) to Pat (a family friend and later Becky's first husband) while Pat was a medic in the Vietnam War, and a photo of Becky. (Residence- Davis)

box 1, folder 3

Correspondence- 1970 Folder 3

Scope and Contents

19 letters that discuss general family information. There are a few letters from Barbara to Pat while he was in Vietnam. There are also letters containing information about Carolyn and Jim's recent move and Barbara's desire to remain in close contact with them. (Residence- Davis)

box 1, folder 4

Correspondence- 1971 Folder 4

Scope and Contents

33 letters informing Rebecca and Pat about the general events happening in the Moore household, such as Annie's progress in school, talks given by John on various topics, visits from Carolyn and Jim Jones, and information about individuals being aided by the family. Some letters contain Barbara's feelings on President Nixon and political events. Extra items in this folder include some letters from John Moore to Becky and Annie, newspaper clippings, and comic strips. (Residence- Davis)

- box 1, folder 5 **Correspondence- Jan-May 1972** Folder 5
Scope and Contents
13 letters containing information about political events and President Nixon, as well as John's sermons. Some discussion about student activists in Berkeley and John's work with them. Barbara provides updates on Annie and mentions a visit from Carolyn and Jim. This folder also contains newspaper clippings and cartoons cutouts. (Residence- Davis)
- box 1, folder 6 **Correspondence- June-Dec 1972** Folder 6
Scope and Contents
19 letters discussing politics, elections, and John's busy schedule away from home. Barbara describes a visit from Carolyn and Jim, and then expresses concern after Annie visits Ukiah and becomes influenced by Peoples Temple. In sharing her concern, Barbara critiques Peoples Temple. She also relays Annie's future plans and provides updates on the move to Berkeley. (Residence- Berkeley)
- box 1, folder 7 **Correspondence- Jan-June 1973** Folder 7
Scope and Contents
15 letters discussing Barbara's new life in Berkeley and her struggle to adjust to living primarily alone with Annie left for college and John away for work. Barbara relays information about Peoples Temple and discusses her feelings about her children being involved. This folder also contains newspaper clippings and cartoons cutouts. (Residence - Berkeley)
- box 1, folder 8 **Correspondence- July-Dec 1973** Folder 8
Scope and Contents
14 letters in which Barbara discusses hosting people in her home in Berkeley, including several individuals taken in from a runaway center during the summer months. Barbara describes a visit to the Peoples Temple commune in Ukiah and provides updates on Annie's life at college and in Ukiah. In one letter, Barbara relays that Annie began lecturing her and John on their politics and beliefs. She also discusses politics, the Watergate scandal, leftist ideologies, and the Peoples Temple philosophy. (Residence- Berkeley)
- box 2, folder 9 **Correspondence- 1974** Folder 9
Scope and Contents
16 letters that discuss John's work with the church. Some letters contain information regarding Carolyn's pregnancy and her desire to keep it a secret. There is some discussion about Jim Jones and Peoples Temple. This folder also contains newspaper clippings and an original poem by Barbara. (Residence- Berkeley)
- box 2, folder 10 **Correspondence: Jan-May 1975** Folder 10
Scope and Contents
19 letters discussing family visits, Carolyn's pregnancy, and her baby, Jim-Jon. Also contains updates on Peoples Temple and discussion of Jim Jones' health issues.
- box 2, folder 11 **Correspondence- June-Dec 1975** Folder 11
Scope and Contents
18 letters that discuss Becky's divorce and Barbara's desire for Becky to move closer to home. There is discussion of Barbara and John's busy lifestyle and John's work in the church. Some letters contain information about People's Temple and Barbara's feelings about Jim Jones. This folder also includes newspaper clippings, comics, and greeting cards. (Residence- Berkley)
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box 2, folder 12

Correspondence- 1976 Folder 12

Scope and Contents

26 letters in which Barbara expresses her feelings about moving to Reno, Nevada. There is discussion of things that happened in the church and farewell parties that were held in Barbara and John's honor as they prepared to move. Some conversation about the presidential election and Becky's divorce. Barbara mentions troubles with Jim Jones health and reputation. A picture of John and Barbara from "The Methodist Reporter" accompanies one of the letters. (Residence- Berkley moving to Reno)

box 2, folder 13

Correspondence- 1977 Folder 13

Scope and Contents

12 letters discussing church business, the community in Reno, and a book Becky was attempting to publish. Barbara expresses a desire for her children to live closer to her and also mentions Carolyn, Annie, and Jim's travels to Guyana. At one point Barbara refers to the healing practices of Peoples Temple as "somewhat fraudulent" and reports that Jim Jones had a desire to give up that aspect of his church. She also discusses the New West article on Peoples Temple published in August. (Residence- Reno)

box 2, folder 14

Correspondence- 1978 Folder 14

Scope and Contents

16 letters discussing Methodist church operations, Barbara's health, and Peoples Temple. Barbara mentions a conflict Becky had with Peoples Temple and Carolyn and criticizes Jim Jones' leadership. She also discusses Peoples Temples' publicity issues and a phone interview with a reporter. Barbara reports on her visit to Guyana and also mentions phone conversations with Carolyn and Annie.(Residence- Reno)

box 2, folder 15

Correspondence- 1979 Folder 15

Scope and Contents

16 letters that discuss the family's emotional struggle during the holiday season and how Barbara is processing her children's deaths. There is mention of a memorial service that was held in honor of Carolyn, Annie, and Jim-Jon. Also contains information regarding travel to Guyana for various reasons. (Residence- Reno)

box 2, folder 16

Correspondence- 1980 Folder 16

Scope and Contents

39 letters that describe John's quest to become Bishop and how that was affecting their lives. There is much discussion on the tragedy of Jonestown and how the family was dealing with the loss. Some letters also mention Becky's recent decision to adopt children. Additives in this folder include newspaper clippings, greeting cards, poetry, a letter to Barbara from a friend of Annie's, and an article written by Barbara about the People's Temple tragedy. (Residence- Reno)

box 2, folder 17

Correspondence- 1981 Folder 17

Scope and Contents

12 letters that discuss Barbara and John's move to Sacramento and the new church. Also contains information regarding Becky's adoption of 3 children and her move to Montana. There is discussion about Barbara and John's meetings with other families involved in the Jonestown tragedy. (Reno moving to Sacramento)

box 3, folder 18

Correspondence- 1982 Folder 18**Scope and Contents**

36 letters that discuss Ronald Reagan and political issues happening at the time. Information regarding Becky's pregnancy and miscarriage, as well as parenting advice from Barbara. Some letters contain information about a biography of Jim Jones that Barbara had read; she expresses how surprised she was to learn of his childhood and early life. Letters also contain general information regarding Barbara's struggle with depression surrounding the loss, having a difficult time adjusting to the busy life in Sacramento, and details about her new job. She includes excerpts from her journal written in November 1978 and reflects on her initial reaction upon learning of the Jonestown massacre. (Residence- Sacramento)

box 3, folder 19

Correspondence- 1983 Folder 19**Scope and Contents**

28 letters in which Barbara gives Becky child rearing advice and encouragement about Becky's book she was attempting to publish. Also discussion on Barbara's desire to speak about Jonestown and to tell the family's story. (Residence- Sacramento)

box 3, folder 20

Correspondence- 1984 Folder 20**Scope and Contents**

19 letters that discuss the grandchildren staying with Barbara and John for a part of the summer, and the children's behavior issues. Also provided information about a talk Becky was to give about Jonestown. Some letters discuss Ronald Reagan. (Residence- Sacramento)

box 3, folder 21

Correspondence- 1985 Folder 21**Scope and Contents**

37 letters that discuss Barbara's reflection on raising her own children and insight into things she wished she had done differently. Also contains information pertaining to Barbara's excitement about Becky's book and her positive take on Jonestown. Some letters contain parenting advice as well as information regarding Becky's grandmother's health. Barbara also gives insight into John's struggle with when to retire. (Residence- Sacramento)

box 3, folder 22

Correspondence- 1986 Folder 22**Scope and Contents**

34 letters that contain information about John's retirement and their move to Davis, California. Barbara reflects on visits with family members, including Becky and her family. Becky's publication of her book prompted Barbara to reflect on Jim Jones and Peoples Temple. Included in this folder are newspaper clippings (some on John and his work in the church) and a picture of Becky and her family. (Residence- Sacramento moving to Davis)

box 4, folder 23

Correspondence- 1987 Folder 23**Scope and Contents**

42 letters from Barbara and John that discuss John and Barbara's retirement and end of life plans. Letters also discuss the upcoming tenth anniversary of Jonestown and the families hope to share a different side of the tragedy, a human side. Included in this folder are newspaper clippings, postcards, greeting cards, and letters from John. (Residence- Davis and Modesto)

box 4, folder 24

Correspondence- 1988 Folder 24**Scope and Contents**

37 letters that discuss an issue that Barbara had with jury duty when she was dismissed due to her family's involvement with Peoples Temple. There are letters from John that pertain to a legal case concerning a former minister from Davis, California and a newspaper clipping that corresponded. Included are a newspaper clipping about a book on Peoples Temple and a letter from John. (Residence- Davis)

box 4, folder 25

Correspondence- 1989 Folder 25**Scope and Contents**

35 letters that discuss work Barbara and John were performing for the community and John's recent retirement. Also discussed is the couples declining health as they grow older and their desire to rest more. Barbara gave details on John's new part-time job working for an AIDS organization. Supplemental items include newspaper clippings, letters from John to Becky and Mac, a Methodist church newsletter, and post cards. (Residence- Davis)

box 4, folder 26

Correspondence- 1990 Folder 26**Scope and Contents**

9 letters that discuss Barbara's work in a soup kitchen and speeches that John was making on various topics. Some information is given about friends and community life. (Residence- Davis)

box 4, folder 27

Correspondence- 1991 Folder 27**Scope and Contents**

20 letters that discuss the family's emotional struggle around Annie's birthday and health issues experienced by John and Barbara. There is general information regarding community life and visits from friends and family. Extra items include photos of Becky and Annie from the 1960's, photos of Becky's daughter Hillary, and some unidentified photos. Also included in this folder is a pamphlet pertaining to the Jonestown memorial service and a holiday flyer containing information about the family's year. (Residence- Davis)

box 5, folder 28

Correspondence- 1992 Folder 28**Scope and Contents**

39 letters containing information on Becky's enrolment in a PhD program. There is discussion about summer plans and Barbara and John taking care of Becky's daughters. Also discussed are retirement plans and what John and Barbara expect of Becky for end of life care. Extra items include a letter from John to *Psychology Today* regarding an article pertaining to Jonestown, as well as a flyer for women's health month, newspaper clippings, post cards, and greeting cards. (Residence- Davis)

box 5, folder 29

Correspondence- 1993 Folder 29**Scope and Contents**

12 letters that discuss general information about events in the church and around the community. Extra items include a newspaper article about Barbara and John pertaining to Peoples Temple, and a letter from John to Becky and Mac. (Residence- Davis)

box 5, folder 30

Correspondence- 1994 Folder 30**Scope and Contents**

20 letters that discuss Barbara and John's extensive work with an organization called "Loaves and Fishes". Barbara also discusses Becky's daughter Hillary spending the summer with them and general updates about people in the community. This folder contains some greeting cards. (Residence- Davis)

box 5, folder 31	<p>Correspondence- 1995 Folder 31</p> <p>Scope and Contents</p> <p>29 letters that discuss issues with Barbara's health and the death of Becky's daughter Hillary. There is also some discussion about Becky's other daughter December and her legal issues. Information pertaining to the 17 th annual Jonestown memorial ceremony and some family members of victims desire to erect a Jonestown memorial wall. Newspaper clippings and a photo are also in this folder. (Residence- Davis)</p>
box 5, folder 32	<p>Correspondence- 1996 Folder 32</p> <p>Scope and Contents</p> <p>40 letters that discuss the anniversary of Becky's daughter Hillary's death, as well as general information pertaining to members of the community. Barbara mentions a speech she witnessed by Hillary Clinton. Extra items in this folder include newspaper clippings, photos, a family newsletter, and a few letters from friends and family to Becky. (Residence- Davis)</p>
box 5, folder 33	<p>Correspondence- 1997 Folder 33</p> <p>Scope and Contents</p> <p>32 letters that discuss Barbara and John's work in the community with the homeless and the organization "Loaves and Fishes". Letters from John to Becky discuss Barbara's health issues and her emotional turmoil over the families many losses. Also discussed is Becky's daughter December's unplanned pregnancy. Extras in this folder include postcards, newspaper clippings, and photos of the family at Thanksgiving. (Residence- Davis)</p>
box 6, folder 34	<p>Correspondence- 1998 Folder 34</p> <p>Scope and Contents</p> <p>32 letters that discuss John's desire to compose some articles related to the family's experience with Peoples Temple and Jonestown. A letter from John to Becky discusses a phone call he had with December and his concern for her wellbeing. Also mentioned is Barbara and John's feelings on a recent Jonestown documentary and the annual Jonestown memorial service. Extra items include greeting cards, newspaper clippings, and letters to Becky from friends and family. (Residence- Davis)</p>
box 6, folder 35	<p>Correspondence- 1999 Folder 35</p> <p>Scope and Contents</p> <p>10 letters that discuss general updates on friends and family, as well as Becky's new job in San Diego at San Diego State University. In some of these letters, Barbara reflects on Carolyn and Annie's character and personalities in their final years of life. (Residence- Davis)</p>
flat_file 1	<p>Newspaper clippings Flat File 1</p> <p>Scope and Contents</p> <p>6 newspaper clippings unrelated to Peoples Temple from Box 1, Folder 8, and Box 2, Folders 14 and 18.</p> <p>Titles of articles: "Why first impressions are so valuable." "Circuit rider for peace." "The Capital - running from the house." "The no. 1 Nixon hater." "How a polite rebel ousted a med school dean." "From the high prairies to deep sorrow - People of the Sacred Mountain: a history of the Northern Cheyenne chiefs and warrior societies,1830-1979."</p>

Letters 1**Scope and Contents**

Most letters have a month and day but no year. These letters are organized alphabetically by the name of the recipient. All letters appear to be from Barbara to Becky, Becky and Pat, Pat while he was in Vietnam, or Becky and Mac. There are some partial letters at the end of this folder.

box 6, folder 36

Correspondence- Date Unknown Folder 36**Scope and Contents**

Most letters have a month and day but no year. These letters are organized alphabetically by the name of the recipient. All letters appear to be from Barbara to Becky, Becky and Pat, Pat while he was in Vietnam, or Becky and Mac. There are some partial letters at the end of this folder.

Letters from Barbara Moore to her Brother, Robert A. Covington, and his wife, Mary Covington 2

box 6, folder 37

Correspondence Folder 37 **1964-1990****Scope and Contents**

23 greeting cards, postcards, and letters from Barbara to her brother, Robert ("Bob"), and his wife, Mary. The letters and cards mostly contain general life updates, holiday recaps, brief descriptions of Barbara and John's travels (to Athens, Baltimore, and Montana), and thoughts on various conferences and church business. (Residence: Reno [1979], Sacramento [1982-1985], Davis [1988-1990])

box 6, folder 38

Correspondence Folder 38 **1991-1996****Scope and Contents**

19 greeting cards, postcards, letters, and holiday newsletters that detail holiday and vacation plans; health issues of various friends, family, and members of John and Barbara's church; and John and Barbara's various speaking engagements. (Residence-Davis)

box 6, folder 39

Correspondence Folder 39 **1997-2002****Scope and Contents**

23 greeting cards, letters, and postcards, most of which are from Barbara to Bob and Mary, with one letter to Barbara's nephew, Dick Williams, and his wife, Ruth Ann Williams, and one letter with an insert from Becky to "Uncle Bob and Aunt Mary." Correspondence deals with health updates; recaps of parties and church functions; news about Becky, Mac, John, and December; and general life updates. (Residence-Davis)

box 6, folder 40

Correspondence, Date Unknown Folder 40**Scope and Contents**

16 greeting cards, letters, and postcards, some with news clippings or inserts. Topics include holidays; "Loaves and Fishes" project; travels to Canada, Montana, North Dakota, and Spain; Hillary's health problems; and Carolyn's car troubles.

Greeting Cards II

box 6, folder 41

Greeting Cards Folder 41

Scope and Contents

Some greeting cards have a date and/or year, others are unknown. Cards were to Becky from Barbara and John, her husband Mac, or her daughter December. They were for a variety of holidays and occasions. Some cards contain long notes inside, others are simply signed. Some cards have been altered by Barbara to add a personal touch. There are other greeting cards located throughout the other folders that were left due to their relationship with corresponding letters.

Photographs III

box 6, folder 42

Photographs Folder 42

Scope and Contents

Photographs are of family members. Some are from John and Barbara's 50 th wedding anniversary celebration, others are of Becky's daughter December. There are other photos located throughout the folders that came with letters, those have been left within the various folders to help to understand the contents of the corresponding letter.