

Collection #
M 0205
OM 0310

**REV. JIM JONES
GENEALOGY AND PHOTOGRAPHS, 1949, 1980–1982**

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Processed by

Charles Latham
7 February 1994

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Visuals added by Dorothy A. Nicholson
June 2018

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COLLECTION INFORMATION

VOLUME OF COLLECTION: Manuscript Materials: 2 document cases, 1 oversize folder
Visual Materials: 1 photograph folder

COLLECTION DATES: 1949, 1980–1982

PROVENANCE: Virginia Heiss, Indianapolis IN, 20 January 1994
Richard Grogg, Newton, IL, April 2018

RESTRICTIONS: None

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ALTERNATE FORMATS:

RELATED HOLDINGS: Catherine Thrash; *The onliest one alive: surviving Jonestown, Guyana*. Indianapolis, Ind. M.K. Towne, 1995.
I.H.S. General Collection: BP605.P46 T73 1995

Jeff Guinn; *The road to Jonestown: Jim Jones and Peoples Temple*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2017.
I.H.S. General Collection: BP605.P46 G85 2017

ACCESSION NUMBER: 1994.0365, 2018.0089

NOTES:

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Jim Jones (1931–1978), charismatic cult leader, was born in Lynn, Randolph County, Indiana. He was the son of James T. Jones (a member of the Ku Klux Klan) and Lynetta Putnam Jones. Jones dropped out of high school in Lynn, later graduating in Richmond in 1949. He dropped out of Indiana University after a few months. He married Marceline Baldwin in 1949, and the next year they moved to Indianapolis.

Jones then began a career as a religious leader with a tangential relationship to the Church of Christ, which ordained him in 1964. In 1956, he started the Peoples Temple in a former synagogue at 975 North Delaware Street. He studied other religious leaders and was greatly impressed with Father Divine (d. 1965), an African American spiritual leader of the controversial International Peace Mission movement. Jones incorporated radical politics into his teachings, including his socialist leanings and advocacy for racial integration.

After troubles with the Internal Revenue Service, Jones moved his Temple to California, first to Redwood Valley in 1965 and then to San Francisco in 1970. This move marked the period of his greatest success. The Peoples Temple grew to 7500 members, and he was politically active on both a local and national level, gaining supporters in figures such as Harvey Milk and Rosalynn Carter.

Behind the scenes, however, Jones became increasingly addicted to drugs and often engaged in sexual relations with Temple members. His teachings also became more extreme, and he began propagating his belief in "Translation," a post-death shift to another planet that he and his followers would eventually embark upon together. This belief was compounded by mass suicide simulations called "White Nights," wherein members would drink liquid that Jones falsely told them was poisoned.

In 1973, Jones founded a compound in Guyana, which he called Jonestown after himself. An exposé of the Peoples Temple that included allegations of physical, emotional, and sexual abuse was published by *New West* magazine in 1977. Upon learning of the article's contents, Jones and several hundred Temple members abruptly moved to Jonestown.

In November 1978, Congressman Leo Ryan led a fact-finding mission to Jonestown to investigate human rights abuses at the compound. On November 18, Temple member Don Sly attacked Ryan with a knife. Ryan's delegation managed to escape to an airstrip, where Jones's armed guards shot and killed Ryan and four others.

Later that same day, Jones instructed his followers to drink cyanide-laced Flavor Aid because, after the airstrip murders, a planned exodus to the Soviet Union would no longer be possible. 918 members of the Peoples Temple (including 304 children) died. During the mass murder-suicide, Jim Jones died of a self-inflicted gunshot wound to the head.

Sources:

Materials in the collection and related holdings

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

This collection from two different donors contains manuscripts and photographs.

Box 1 contains genealogical research on the family of Jim Jones, concentrating on the maternal (Putnam) side. Collected by Willard Heiss after the Jonestown massacre, Heiss, then head of the Family History section of Indiana Historical Society, seems to have been interested in testing the truth of Jones's assertion that his mother was a Native American and in finding if there were any family traces of mental instability. In Box 1 Folder 2, there is material about a similar cult in 1908, the "Church of Alpha." The collection retains Heiss's arrangement by family branch, with the branches in alphabetical order. Box 2 and folder OM 0310 contains clippings and three books about Jones and his cult.

The photograph folder has two photographs of the double wedding ceremony of Rev. James (Jim) Jones and Marceline Baldwin with her sister Eloise Baldwin and Dale Klingman at Trinity Methodist Church in Richmond, Indiana, in June 1949. The images show the couples together at the altar and kissing during the ceremony. The photographs came in 2018 from the donor's uncle and aunt who lived next door to the Baldwin sisters.

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Willard Heiss: general correspondence	Box 1, Folder 1
Nora Davis's "Church of Alpha" 1908	Box 1, Folder 2
Cook family	Box 1, Folder 3
Ferrell family	Box 1, Folder 4
Jones family	Box 1, Folders 5–6
Parker family	Box 1, Folders 7–8
Lewis Parker-- legal papers	Box 1, Folder 9
Putnam family	Box 1, Folders 10–14
Correspondence re: Putnam family	Box 1, Folder 15
Putnam family-- Fayette County	Box 1, Folder 16
Thelma Putnam Henderson	Box 1, Folder 17
Shank family	Box 1, Folder 18
Clippings	Box 2, Folder 1
Clippings	OM 0310
<i>Time</i> and <i>Newsweek</i> coverage	Box 2, Folder 2
Marshall Kilduff and Ron Javers, <i>The Suicide Cult</i> (1978)	Box 2, Folder 3
Klineman and Butler, <i>The Cult That Died</i> (1980); Jeanne Mills, <i>Six Years With God</i> (1979)	Box 2, Folder 4
Double wedding ceremony of Rev. James (Jim) Jones and Marcy Baldwin with her sister Eloise Baldwin and Dale Klingman at Trinity Methodist Church, Richmond, Ind. June 1949	Photographs: Folder 1