

REV. JIM JONES

GENEALOGY, 1980-1982

Collection #
M 0205
OM 0310

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Processed by
Charles Latham
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COLLECTION INFORMATION

VOLUME OF COLLECTION:	2 manuscript boxes and 1 oversize folder
COLLECTION DATES:	1980-1982
PROVENANCE:	Virginia Heiss, Indianapolis IN, 20 January 1994
RESTRICTIONS:	None
REPRODUCTION RIGHTS:	Permission to reproduce or publish material in this collection must be obtained in writing from the Indiana Historical Society
ALTERNATE FORMATS:	None
OTHER FINDING AIDS:	None
RELATED HOLDINGS:	None
ACCESSION NUMBER:	1994.0365

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Jim Jones (1931-1978), charismatic cult leader, was born in Lynn, Randolph County, Indiana, the son of James T. and Lynetta Putnam Jones. The father was a member of the Ku Klux Klan. Jim Jones's youth was episodic: he tried several churches; he dropped out of high school in Lynn to graduate 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, where he took some courses at Butler University.

Jones then began a career as a religious leader, with a tangential relationship to the Church of Christ, which finally ordained him in 1964. Meanwhile in 1956 he started the People's Temple in a former synagogue at 975 North Delaware Street. He studied other religious leaders, and was greatly impressed with Father Divine. After some troubles with the Internal Revenue Service, he moved his temple to California in 1965, setting up in Redwood Valley, 125 miles north of San Francisco. In 1970 he moved to San Francisco. This was the period of his greatest success: his temple claimed 7500 members, and he was involved in politics, including being asked to bring a crowd to swell a meeting addressed by Rosalynn Carter.

In 1973 Jones began to develop a center in Guyana, called Jonestown. By 1977 it was in full operation. In November 1978 the colony disappeared as cyanide-laced Kool-Aid was served to its population.

SCOPE AND CONTENT

This collection, filling two manuscript boxes, contains genealogical research on the family of Jim Jones, concentrating on the maternal (Putnam) side. This material was collected just after the Jonestown massacre by Willard Heiss, then head of the Family History section of Indiana Historical Society. Heiss seems to have been interested in testing the truth of Jones's assertion that his mother was a native American, and also in finding whether there were any family traces of mental instability. There is one folder (Box 1 Folder 2) of 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. Included are three books about Jones and his cult.

BOX AND FOLDER LISTING

Box 1: Genealogical Folder Contents

1	Willard Heiss: general correspondence
2	Nora Davis's "Church of Alpha" 1908
3	Cook family
4	Ferrell family
5-6	Jones family
7-8	Parker family
9	Lewis Parker-- legal papers
10-14	Putnam family
15	Correspondence re: Putnam family
16	Putnam family-- Fayette County
17	Thelma Putnam Henderson

Box 2: Press and historical coverage
Folder Contents

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1 | Clippings |
| 2 | (OM 0310) Clippings |
| 3 | <i>Time</i> and <i>Newsweek</i> coverage |
| 4 | Marshall Kilduff and Ron Javers, <i>The Suicide Cult</i> (1978) |
| 5 | Klineman and Butler, <i>The Cult That Died</i> (1980); Jeanne Mills, <i>Six Years With God</i> (1979) |

CATALOGING INFORMATION

For additional information on this collection, including a list of subject headings that may lead you to related materials:

1. Go to the Indiana Historical Society's [online catalog](#)
2. Click on the "Local Catalog" icon.
3. Search for the collection by its call number, using the letter or letters designation and **four** digits (e.g., M 0715, SC 2234).
4. When you find the collection, go to the "Holdings" screen for a list of headings that can be searched for related materials.

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