

August 1977 Journal by Edith Roller

The text here is a pdf image of the pages typed by Edith Roller.

The typed journal includes only August 13 through August 31, 1977.

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JOURNAL

August, 1977

13 August - S - I was up at 8.00.

I went to the Haight Community Food Store and bought vegetables and fruits, and so on. I bought a few items for Lela Murphy. I walked home, arriving around 12.00.

I bought the Sunday San Francisco Examiner and Chronicle, which had a big front-page article on the Temple, making more aspersions.

I ate some macaroni and cheese and fresh tomatoes.

I cleaned out the refrigerator, which was a heavy task. I scrubbed the kitchen floor on my hands and knees, as the mop broke.

I took a nap of about two hours.

I went to the Temple meeting but did not sit in the service, as Laurie Efrein wanted me to write a letter to the Examiner concerning today's article. There are few people left to write any more. Doing a draft, getting it approved and then typing the final version took me all evening.

I didn't get home until about 1.00 o'clock.

14 August - Su - I was up at 8.30. Estelle was not up. Lela had gone to the Temple for breakfast.

I had for breakfast grapefruit, toast, beef sausage and an egg.

Service was at 1.00, but once again I had to work the entire morning for Phyllis Chaikin. She is getting affidavits from the people Jim has healed, which, with medical proof, are to be used in court, I think. A place for me to type was found in the Accounting Office. The typewriter I am using is the IBM I gave to the Temple.

When the service ended at about 2.00, most of the congregation went to Portrero Hill Neighborhood House for an event concerning South Africa, but I went home.

I had dinner and slept an hour and a half.

I returned to the service at 6.00. The congregation had returned and eaten dinner, but the service was late in starting.

Jann Gurvich wanted me to help her outline the principal events which have occurred in American left movements since the 1920's for some public relations work. Using my copy of Radicalism in America by Sidney Lens, I started to make an outline for her, but she never returned. I found later she probably got her orders to go to Jonestown. I let Laurie Efrein borrow the Lens book.

11/17

I helped Phyllis again with the healing affidavits and wrote one describing my arthritis healing. I didn't attend service at all.

The service was out about 9.30. I got home around 10.00.

I learned from Viola Godshalk that Etta Simpson had been taken to the hospital with a bowel obstruction. Estelle later told me she had taken her. Estelle has been under a good deal of pressure taking care of the seniors housed with her, Viola and Florine Dyson, according to her. I have observed that Estelle herself eats too rich a diet. Estelle thought that the nurses downstairs had been too unconcerned about Etta and other seniors when they were ill.

I ate some nuts, read newspapers.

I went to bed at 12.30.

15 August - M - I organized better this morning, getting my breakfast and lunch ready, but Lela came out as usual and was in my way. I requested her to stay in her room until I was through in the morning.

Bob Garb is leaving this week on vacation. He kept me busy most of the day, as his secretary, John Foster, is working on a contract for him.

I ate outside. The weather was good.

I ate tonight at the Temple.

Following my conversation Saturday with Gene Chaikin (I had inquired why some wage-earners younger than I am, such as Magnolia Harris, had left for Jonestown while I was still in San Francisco; he said Magnolia wasn't communal, which means that the Temple does not receive all of her salary, as it does mine), I had come to the conclusion that if I could not leave anyway for perhaps two months, there would be some advantages in offering to stay until the end of the year. I would benefit from the money Bechtel would put in my Trust Fund account and, as I will pass my sixty-second birthday, I would have Social Security benefits. This may not be feasible if the Temple plans for most of us to leave in two months or so.

I cleaned my room.

I went to see Viola as she wanted some help in writing. One letter was to Chris Kice about staying here until Ray leaves, the other letters concerning oppression in South Africa. She also asked me to fill out needs slips for her and Florine. I said I would do these at the office.

I read newspapers.

I went to bed at 12.00.

16 August - T - We had the monthly departmental meeting this morning at 9.00, preceded by coffee and doughnuts. Caspar Weinberger led discussion on the telephone system and the new time card entries system. H. O. Reinsch, President

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of Bechtel Power, was shown on videotape speaking on the energy situation as it affects Bechtel.

I had little to do. I typed a memo for Garb at the end of the day. He is leaving for a vacation in Switzerland.

At noon I saw a film in the employees' film series on Prince Edward Island called "Come In From Away."

I received a telephone call from my sister Dorothy in Park Ridge. She was concerned about details of the present Temple difficulties and my situation. She had read the Newsweek article and sent xeroxes to my other sisters. I had hoped that none of them would see any of the material on the Temple. I assured her that the charges were baseless and that my plans would not be changed. Dorothy, after a visit from Edna, had gone on an architectural tour in Newfoundland this summer, had visited son Paul and his bride Polly in New Jersey, and seen some plays in New York.

I had dinner at the Temple. I didn't see Chaikin to ask him about my proposal to stay until the end of December. More people have left.

I got a ride home with Chris.

Lela had cooked some beans I had bought for her, but she burnt them and the pan. Chris had bought her some fruit.

I exercised.

Estelle was not home. She is often out in the evenings.

I slept for two hours.

Estelle had come in. We talked about Lela, who is reluctant to give any money for food or to pay her rent. She cashes her check now instead of giving it to the Temple but still expects to get all her needs supplied by the Temple. Estelle says that soon we will all receive money to pay our rent and buy our own food, as there won't be any personnel here to cook for us.

I went to bed about 12.00.

17 August - W - I had little work to do today.

I ate outside.

I had access to a telephone of one of the legal assistants who wasn't there, and I telephoned Dorothy. I had a long talk with her. She still shows a bias against Jim on religious grounds. She still doesn't believe in his healing power.

After work I took a bus to the library, returned The Rise of the Colored Races by Keith Irvine.

I ate dinner at home.

HH-2-11

I went to the Temple service. Phyllis Chaikin asked me to help again with affidavits. I spent most of the evening in the Accounting Office except for taking time to see slides of the Soweto demonstration in South Africa in June and July, 1976. I didn't make much progress on affidavits as I had to do some over because of mistakes that either Phyllis or I had made. Laurie wanted a letter written on the latest story in the Chronicle. I wrote in a sarcastic vein and Don Beck disapproved of my approach.

I told Phyllis I would take the day off tomorrow and come in to work on affidavits. My back is hurting because the typewriter chair and stand are not at correct heights for me. I didn't get home until 2.00.

18 August - Th - I slept until 8.00. I phoned the office that I wouldn't be in because of my backache.

I had breakfast.

I did my laundry in the machine and put my clothes away.

I walked to the Temple about 10.00. Phyllis was not there, and the law office where my work was left was locked. I waited about an hour.

I took the bus to Haight Street, bought some handkerchiefs at the second-hand store. I bought a roast beef sandwich and ate it at the bus stop. I took a bus back to the Temple.

Phyllis was at the Temple. I worked on affidavits from about 1.00 to 3.00.

I walked home.

I slept for two hours.

I did personal chores. I washed my hair. I ate a snack. I went to bed at 2.00 o'clock.

19 August - F - Estelle had not come home last night.

This was another dull day at the office. I put in my time card and got my check.

At noon I took the bus to Macy's. I tried to find a simple book holder so that I can take my copy holder home. I found only a \$7.00 plastic cookbook holder, as expensive as a good metal copy holder. I did not buy anything.

I did some expense accounts for D'Neill. He lost his temper about the way I had done one, very unusual for him. He later apologized, saying he had had an argument with a friend.

At home I read newspapers.

I went to the Coop to get groceries. I had dinner when I got home. I pressed clothes. I went to bed about 2.00.

LH-2-170

20 August - S - I got up at 8.00.

I went to the Haight Community Food Store, bought vegetables and fruit. I bought fresh milk and margarine for Lela.

Saturday's Chronicle had another article on the Temple. It told of our Guyana activities.

I prepared and ate lunch.

Estelle McCall and I had a conversation about Lela and the problem of her food. Lela doesn't want to spend any money. She appeals to Estelle's sympathy and Estelle gives her food. If food is bought for her she forgets she has it. She says she wants to shop for herself, but when taken to the store, she doesn't buy anything. This morning Judy complained because yesterday Lela told her she was eating upstairs, thus didn't need transportation to the Temple, but she told Estelle there was no transportation. Estelle gave her food, saying she couldn't let her go hungry. I don't give her anything.

I had a message to meet Phyllis at the Temple at 5.30. I had intended to clean out the kitchen shelves but decided not to.

I slept two hours. I prepared and ate dinner.

I went to the Temple at 6.00. I worked before and during the service with Phyllis on the healing affidavits.

I received word that Marcy Jones wanted to see me after the service. She had a message from Jim: someone close to me would turn against me; I should not be startled. Marcy's parents are here, and she proposed that her mother and she have lunch with me next week.

I worked until about 12.00, an hour after the service was dismissed.

When I got home, I read newspapers. I went to bed at 2.00.

21 August - Su - I got up at 8.00. I had breakfast, as did Estelle. Estelle gave me a ride to service at 11.00.

I worked again with Phyllis on affidavits. I have been using the typewriter and some table space assigned to Bette McLain who is very pleasant but became a little annoyed yesterday. I had to move but today was permitted to go on as I had been. Bette does accounting. Tish Leroy, in charge of the office, works elsewhere in isolation most of the time.

Others in the office are Maria McLain, also doing accounting, Jim Randolph, who handles transportation, helped by Phyllis Houston, and Lisa Layton, who works on passports and travel documents.

Jack Beam was in. He told of plans to move all staff in order to consolidate us in two buildings on Divisadero.

In addition to working on affidavits, I wrote another letter for Laurie.

JH-2-12

I gave her the draft. She made copies for the Chronicle and Examiner and had me sign them.

The service was dismissed about 2.00. I went home, prepared and ate dinner. I slept two hours.

I returned to the Temple at 6.30. I inquired of Chris Kice about plans to move us from 1029 Geary. She said we would move between 1 and 15 September to Divisadero.

I continued work on affidavits. Several additions and changes have been made in the forms, and these, as well as problems with the typewriters, have made the work difficult. Today we had to put into effect a new procedure for obtaining information from doctors, due to a change in the law. Signatures have to be secured anew from people who are now in Guyana. We also had to prepare affidavits for some people to sign before they left on the bus for Los Angeles.

The service was over about 10.00. I left my office telephone number for Marcy. I got home about 10.30.

Wanda King has moved in to our apartment. She is sharing Lela's room.

Etta Simpson came home from the hospital.

I read newspapers. I went to bed about 11.00.

22 August - M - I had no work to do all day. I wrote a letter to my sisters.

I ate outside. The weather was very warm.

I went to the post-office and bought stamps.

After work I went to the Temple for dinner. Edith Cordell, Mark and Vern Gosney are being moved to McAllister Street.

At home I had an hour's nap. I did my exercises. I cleaned up some of the shelves in the kitchen. Dishes and food of all kinds were indiscriminately jumbled together, and it has been hard to find what one needs. I worked about two hours.

Wanda came and she cleaned up the bathroom.

I had something to eat and read newspapers. I went to bed at 12.30.

23 August - T - Again I had no work in the office.

Marcy had called and invited me to lunch with her and her mother. She inquired how to get to my building. I suggested she drive down Mission and that I wait on the corner of Mission and Beale. I had inquired of Betty Barclay about places to eat. She suggested the Boiler Room.

Marcy came by a few minutes after 12.00. She parked on Beale several blocks up, for 75¢. We walked to the Boiler Room on Howard Street. We had sandwiches.

11/10/12

I told Marcy of my situation. She inquired what I wanted to do. I told her of my proposal that I stay until the end of the year. She thought that this was a good idea. We talked briefly of Temple difficulties. She said Jim was eager to return and do battle. Charles Garry advised that progressive leaders had in the recent past been damaged in the courts and he advised against litigation.

On returning to the office, I had a talk with Marc. She is planning to leave Bechtel and go to Arkansas to be with her parents. She is distressed because her car will be repossessed if she takes it out of the state. She owes \$1200 on it. I advised her to sell it (she says she can get \$2000 for it), do without a car until she can get another.

I left the office a little early. I went to the Temple and ate dinner. Most members left by 5.30 for a rally at San Quentin opposing capital punishment. This is the anniversary of the execution of Sacco and Vanzetti. I went in a car driven by Betty Finch. Cathy Jackson was with us. At the ferry landing we parked and were driven to San Quein in shuttle buses.

The rally was in the yard before the entrance. Speakers from numerous Bay Area liberal and radical organizations appeared. Joan Baez and Mimi Farina sang. Charles Garry was among those who spoke. We were there about two hours.

Betty took me directly home. I exercised. I read newspapers. I went to bed at 11.30.

24 August - W - Again I had no work.

Marc told me she gave notices.

I ate at my desk. I then went to PG&E where I saw a film, "Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit," which showed early American folk art.

After work I went directly home. I prepared and ate dinner.

I went to the Temple for the service. Phyllis has taken a job. Jennie Cheek is in charge of healing affidavits, but she did not give me any work to do, so I attended the entire service. A list of items needed for baby care in Guyana was read by Marchy, and Wesley Johnson took up a collection to buy them. He must have raised \$1,000 in half an hour. Marcy was present only a short time. The service was dismissed early.

I went to bed at 12.30.

25 August - Th - Betty Vasil in mid-morning gave me a job: to type the file index, which I did last year, inserting changes. I put the document on MagCards, working on it two hours in the morning, three and a half hours in the afternoon.

Marc is leaving on 16 September.

A light rain was falling, so I ate at my desk.

HH-2-12

After work I went to the Temple for dinner.

When I arrived home, Etta told me Lela was leaving for Guyana tonight. Chris had helped her pack. Chris had bought her clothes, as she did not have enough underwear. Irene Mason was also going. Her son had taken her away, but she was dissatisfied and had come back.

Estelle told me I would have a roommate.

Judy Merriam had no place to sleep. She had a tubal ligature today (she wants to be sure she doesn't have a child as she is thirty-seven and has defective heredity. I invited her to sleep in the other bed in my room.

I did my laundry and personal chores and washed my hair. I forgot to wash my stockings and girdle.

Lela and Irene were taken by Chris about 8.30, after Lela had attempted to call her son. The nurses were intent on monitoring the call. I doubt whether she got through. I believe she was very happy to go.

Rheavina came in and there was much gaiety. A large number of cantaloupes had been donated, and we were all eating cantaloupes.

I had a snack.

Judy and I went to bed about 12.00.

26 August - F - I worked most of the day on the file index.

When I got home tonight Virginia had been moved in to the room across from me, and Lavanna James was to share the room, although she spent the night in their former room in an apartment across the hall. My roommate is to be Wanda King. Virginia has some kind of speech difficulty, though she tries to express herself. Lavanna had once spent some time with me in my apartment on Fell Street and had mended my underwear. She has since been in an automobile accident; although Jim saved her life, she still suffers some ill effects.

I went to the Coop and bought groceries.

Estelle left on a long trip for the Temple, probably handling estates.

I pressed clothes.

I had a snack and read newspapers.

I went to bed about 12.00. Wanda stayed with Ruby Johnson, who isn't left alone. She is Rubby Carroll's mother.

27 August - S - I got up at 8.00.

I went to the Haight Neighborhood Coop and got vegetables and fruits.

The day was very hot.

I got something to eat for lunch.

I had to put my belongings in one bureau and my trunk. I rearranged them, so that Wanda could have the other bureau. She put away her things. Wanda is very neat.

I had a nap. Wanda was surprised that I slept so well while she was moving around the room.

Lavanna moved in across the hall.

I prepared and ate dinner and washed the dishes.

I went to the service at 7.30. Jim talked to us on the radio for a long time, describing everything at our mission in Guyana. He asked that the congregation vote whether he should stay there or come back. We overwhelmingly voted for him to stay in Guyana.

The service was out early.

Carrie Langston, who usually stays with Estelle when she comes to San Francisco from the Valley, asked whether we had room for her. Etta brought her home.

I went to bed about 12.00.

28 August - Su - I got up around 8.00.

I prepared breakfast for Carrie and Wanda. I made biscuits, which I had to bake across the hall, as our oven pilot light is off, and cooked sausage.

I went to the Temple for service. Phyllis was there and had more work for me to do. I typed some affidavits and also did some letters for Laurie. Two were to thank George McManus and Thomas Fleming for their remarks on Jim Jones and People's Temple on KCBS's program "A Question of Religion" and in the Sun Reporter respectively. The third was to the Chronicle on a summary of the Temple case which was slanted against us.

The accounting office was vigorously packing its documents and supplies.

The service was out at 2.00.

I went home to eat, accompanied by Etta. In the hall of the apartment house I found a lost kitten, and I took him in, gave him water, milk and some meat, putting a notice for the owner on the elevator.

I prepared food and shared it with Etta.

I had a two-hour nap.

Etta and I returned to the service at 6.30. Etta told me Mabel Johnson

had not gone to Guyana yet because she wished to arrange for her son to go too, as she is afraid he will be in jail again. He wasn't in service today, so we agreed his situation doesn't look very good. Kaye Roxas is still here with her little girl, of whom someone else is the legal guardian.

I worked again for Phyllis. Laurie wanted me to redo the Chronicle letter. I stayed to type it again. Andy Simon took me home.

The kitten was gone from the apartment. I think the owner saw my note and got the manager to let him in.

I cooked some green beans to put in next week's lunches.

I ate some fruit and read newspapers.

Wanda slept in the room tonight. It was hot and she was restless.

29 August - M - Dorothy is on vacation this week and I moved back into the Word Processing Center, occupying my former desk.

Marc told me that she was informed by Cathy and Dorothy that the Legal Department is going to be reorganized. They were told by Betty Vasil because they were going to be on vacation this week. Betty is very downcast. Marc expects the Word Processing Center to be abolished. I don't know what will be the effect on my job. Betty, Marc said, is going to give details to her administrative staff this week.

I spent the morning finishing the corrections on the File Index and turned over a typed copy to Betty.

Marc spent most of the day making arrangements for her move.

No work came into the office.

I ate outside. The hot weather continued.

I spent a little time on journal entries.

I made copies of the letters to Thomas Fleming and George McManus for their coverage of the Temple controversy.

At home I exercised.

Wanda vacuumed the floor in the apartment. She seemed annoyed at having to do the work.

I read newspapers and listened to the radio.

I saw an announcement in the paper that the Temple was to be featured on a KNBR program at 8.00. I phoned the Temple and the nurses' office at 1029 Geary. However, at the time the program was announced, a baseball game was in progress.

- I was preparing food for tomorrow's lunch when Jim Randolph arrived,

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wanting to use the telephone. The KNBR program had started at 10.00, and he was to call in. We plugged in my radio and listened. The program was a discussion with Marshall Kilduff and Phil Tracy, authors of the New West article, who were answering questions from the radio audience. The moderator of the program was a woman who seemed to encourage hostility to the Temple. Many of the callers claimed to be former members who told of "beatings," being coerced into giving property to the Temple, and so on. Deanna and Mert Mertle, giving false names, called in. Some Temple members got through. Phyllis Houston tried from the downstairs phone but did not succeed. She came up and we all listened until 12.00 when the program ended.

Wanda had come in and gone to bed.

I went to bed at 12.15.

30 August - T - I spent most of the day trying to enter the File Index notes from the Mag Cards into the computer. I got some instructions from Susan Wintersteen at the Computer Center. Some adjustments have to be made. This afternoon I entered all the cards and ordered a print-out, from which I can make changes tomorrow.

Susan was over to confer with Virginia Duncan and told Marc and me she was making recommendations for the Legal Department's computer and typewriter needs. This will take several weeks to act on, so it is unlikely job assignments will be rearranged very soon.

At lunchtime I saw a film, "Tomorrow's Saudi Arabia," in the employees' series. It was a BBC production, about fifty minutes long, and covered many aspects of the changing life in that country.

No work came into the office.

The weather became cooler in the afternoon.

I went to the Temple after work to eat.

I had written up Viola Godshalk's needs as well as my own but forgot to turn them in. I got home and had to turn around and come back to the Temple.

Wanda seemed to be offended, as she was last night, as if I did not do my share of the work in the apartment. I had made up my mind to remind her that I am nearly sixty-two, am holding down a full-time job which puts me under much pressure, and that many people expect me to do as much extra work as a younger person. However, I never got an opportunity to say anything.

Virginia had gone to the hospital for an operation but returned today, saying it turned out not to be necessary.

I didn't exercise but cleaned out and rearranged the pots and pans and foodstuffs on the floor of the pantry. Some of them are items left from the Temple bake-sales, and the rest were brought in by the numerous people who have lived in the apartment. I tried to keep out only utensils of various sizes which we might need. Estelle is still away.

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I read newspapers.

I went to bed about 11.30. Wanda had been in and out but came to bed later.

31 August - W - The weather was very pleasant today.

I called Mabs on the WATS line. We had a brief conversation. She has a heavy load of home teaching and expects more in the fall. The weather is very hot there. I told her my situation, and she asked whether she could write to my present address; I told her yes.

I ate lunch outside. I went to the post-office, bought stamps and a postal card. I wrote a card to Beulah Pendleton, as I shall probably see her this week-end.

I got my print-out of Betty's file index. Susan Wintersteen came in the afternoon and helped me make corrections in it on the computer. I worked on it until closing time.

I went home after work, washed and changed clothes. I went to the Temple to eat. I read the newspaper for a while. Then I lay down on the floor at the back of the platform and rested for half an hour, as I had a backache.

Service was at 7.30. Wesley Johnson and Guy Young presided until Marcy arrived.

Volunteers to distribute the Temple newspaper, "The Peoples Forum," were requested to cover routes formerly handled by those who have left for Guyana, and the loan of cars was sought to help.

Members who will remain here while others go to Los Angeles were requested to take security posts. The response was not very good.

Homes were sought for five dogs which members had to leave. Three of them were placed.

Daisy Lee, a young student nurse who is a friend of Bob Stroud, attended service. I think she is Chinese. Sharon Amos introduced me to her at dinner yesterday.

Service was out at 10.00. I got my Muni pass for September.

I went home on Muni with Mabel Johnson. Her son was waiting for her. I was told he is the reason she has not left yet for Guyana, but he has not been attending service lately, so I don't know what she can hope for. She is of course afraid that he will go back to jail. I believe Jim has gotten him out at least twice.

I ate a snack, some cantaloupe and some bread which Etta had baked, using Estelle's bake goods supplies.

I went to bed at 11.30.

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