Grace Rosanky Putnam Jones was born in Waelder, Texas, to William and Juddie Rosanky, on November 6, 1920. She grew up on a ranch in Smithville, Texas, but was introduced to fashion by her Aunt Johnnie at a young age. Grace was immensely proud of her WASP service for the rest of her life—she eventually became Commanding Officer of her unit—and her papers contain numerous records related to that service.

Unfortunately, the War did not end with a happy reunion for Grace and Tom. Immediately after returning home, Tom admitted to an affair and asked Grace for a divorce. Grace did not know it yet, but her WASP service would also be the means by which she met her second husband. She "borrowed" a plane to fly to Florida to visit a cousin, and upon making an illegal landing; she met Lt. Colonel Jack Jones. The two disliked each other immediately, but like many love stories, they eventually fell for each other after being reunited in New York City.

Grace went to New York City after the War and made a name for herself as a runway and commercial model. This period of her life is well documented in her papers as the "Queen of Texas Fashion," Grace Jones. The documents in these papers are a representation of the public image of the "Queen of Texas Fashion," Grace Jones.

Subjects

Administrative Information
Restrictions on Access and Use
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Preferred Citation
When quoting material from this collection, the preferred citation is:
Grace Rosanky Putnam Jones Papers, #3834, Box #, Folder #, The Texas Collection, Baylor University.

Processing Information
Described by Adina Johnson and released on 2013-04-23.

Scope and Content
The Grace Rosanky Putnam Jones papers were acquired by gift in one transaction from Mary Margaret Quadlander on November 13, 2013.

This collection begins in 1934 and ends in 2009. The Literary Productions series features documents relating to Grace's experience as a WASP as well as her time as a store owner. The Scrapbooks series documents many aspects of Grace's life, from her time in Japan to her famous store, Grace Jones. The Photographic Materials series includes a large number of photos of Grace from her days as a model in New York.

Administrative/Biographical History
To her contemporaries, "Grace Jones of Salado" was known as a World War II WASP pilot, a New York fashion model, and the owner of an internationally famous couture fashion store in Texas. The Grace Rosanky Putnam Jones papers are filled with news clippings, photographs, and scrapbooks documenting this life of adventure and glamour. The documents in these papers are a representation of the public image of the "Queen of Texas Fashion," Grace Jones.

Grace Rosanky Putnam Jones was born in Waelder, Texas, to William and Juddie Rosanky, on November 6, 1920. She grew up on a ranch in Smithville, Texas, but was introduced to fashion by her Aunt Johnnie at a young age. While in high school Grace fell in love with Tom Putnam, eventually graduating a year early to follow Tom to Baylor University, where he was training to become an Air Force pilot. The two married on March 9 in the First Christian Church of Smithville. Grace was soon pregnant with twins, but both babies died only one day after they were born one month premature. This would be the only pregnancy of Grace's life, and it remained a very private tragedy for Grace. Tom left to serve in the front lines of World War II only a few months later. In 1941 Grace left Baylor to transfer to the University of Texas. In 1942, Grace saw an issue of LOOK magazine featuring female pilots, the next day Grace enrolled in pilot training, and she soon left college and entered WASP (Women Air Force Service Pilots) training at Avenger Field in Sweetwater, Texas. Grace was immensely proud of her WASP service for the rest of her life—she eventually became Commanding Officer of her unit—and her papers contain numerous records related to that service.

Unfortunately, the War did not end with a happy reunion for Grace and Tom. Immediately after returning home, Tom admitted to an affair and asked Grace for a divorce. Grace did not know it yet, but her WASP service would also be the means by which she met her second husband. She "borrowed" a plane to fly to Florida to visit a cousin, and upon making an illegal landing; she met Lt. Colonel Jack Jones. The two disliked each other immediately, but like many love stories, they eventually fell for each other after being reunited in New York City.

Grace went to New York City after the War and made a name for herself as a runway and commercial model. This collection contains many photographs of Grace's modeling days. During this period Grace met many fashion designers and models who would eventually become key to her future in retail. Grace kept in contact with Jack Jones and they eventually married. After they married, Grace accompanied Jack on his Air Force postings in Germany during the Berlin Airlift and then in Japan. She became the first American woman to perform the intricate Japanese Tea Ceremony, earning her press coverage all over Japan and leading President Dwight D. Eisenhower to name her an "ambassador abroad." After returning to the States, Jack and Grace moved to Texas, where Jack planned on breeding thoroughbred horses. Grace decided to open a couture dress shop, "Grace Jones," in Salado, Texas, a town of less than 500 people. Through her many connections in the fashion industry—and a private plane landing strip behind the store—Grace built an international base of customers. She became famous for her excellent buying taste and the publicity and charity events she threw. Her close friends and customers included Liz Carpenter, Erma Bombeck, Lady Bird Johnson, and Joan Brasharer. This period of her life is well documented in her papers.

Unfortunately, the strain of running a business was too much for the Jones' marriage, and the two divorced in 1981.
After her business partner and sister-in-law Genelle died in 2000, Grace closed the store. Twenty-five newspapers and magazines announced the closing throughout the world. Grace lived the rest of her life quietly, dying on 2008 February 16.

The Grace Rosanky Putnam Jones papers were donated by her biographer. This 14-box record group would be an excellent resource for any researcher interested in studying the fashion industry, World War II, or female entrepreneurs.

Related Resources

Related citations


Archival Arrangement

Prior to this finding aid, the Grace Rosanky Putnam Jones papers were partially organized by the donor into research files. Those files that remained have been preserved and their folder titles have the original title in quotation marks. Documents that were not in research files had no organizational scheme. There was no inventory of the entire collection or finding aid.

Currently, this collection has been organized into 8 series. I. Correspondence, II. Literary Productions, III. Research Materials (for mixed-media files), IV. Scrapbooks, V. Photographic Materials, VI. Artifacts, VII. Audio and Visual Materials, and VIII. Books.

Series 1: Correspondence. 1943-2001, undated

Administrative/Biographical History

This series includes correspondence written to and from Grace Jones. It includes personal correspondence with Grace’s first husband, Tom, and several boyfriends, close friends, and others. It also includes professional correspondence regarding the WASPs and the Canada Film Festival which Grace was invited to attend. This series is in average to good condition.

Item List

Box 1. Folder 1. Correspondence: Personal: “Tom Putnam: First Husband”, 1943, undated
Box 1. Folder 2. Correspondence: Personal: “Boyfriends”, 1945, undated
Box 1. Folder 3. Correspondence: Personal: “Grace”, undated
Box 1. Folder 4. Correspondence: WASPs, 1944-1945
Box 1. Folder 5. Correspondence: WASPs, 1984, 2001
Box 1. Folder 6. Correspondence: Canada Film Festival, 1977 March 4
Box 1. Folder 7. Correspondence: “Grace’s Important Friends”, 1987, undated

Series 2: Literary Productions. 1935-2003, undated

Summary Information

Extent (quantity/size) 4 boxes, 2 oversized folders

Administrative/Biographical History

This series contains a large variety of clippings, notes, essays, administrative documents, and other printed material relating to different aspects of Grace Jones’s life. Many of the documents pertain to Grace’s time as a WASP, as well as WASP reunions and other publicity. Notably, included are two Japanese periodicals that highlight Grace Jones’s experiences there. There are also many documents relating to Grace’s store and her charity events. This series is in average to excellent condition.

Item List

Box 1. Folder 8. Literary Productions: Essays: High School: Grace Jones, undated
Box 1. Folder 9. Literary Productions: Notes: “General”, undated
Box 1. Folder 10. Literary Productions: Notes: Spiritual, undated
Box 1. Folder 15. Literary Productions: Programs: “Tea Cult of Japan”, 1935
Box 1. Folder 16. Literary Productions: Clippings: “Message to Jack Jones”, undated
Box 2. Folder 1. Literary Productions: Administrative Documents: WASPs, 1943
Box 2. Folder 2. Literary Productions: Administrative Documents: WASPs (1 of 3), 1944
Box 2. Folder 3. Literary Productions: Administrative Documents: WASPs (2 of 3), 1944
Box 2. Folder 4. Literary Productions: Administrative Documents: WASPs (3 of 3), 1944
Box 2. Folder 5. Literary Productions: Administrative Documents: WASPs, undated
Box 2. Folder 6. Literary Productions: WASP Files: 30th Memorial Reunion, 1975 June 24-25
Administrative/Biographical History
This series includes multiple scrapbooks relating to Grace Jones’s life, including her store, experience as a WASP, and her trip to Japan.

Summary Information
Photographic print


Item List
Box 5 Folder 1. Research Materials: "VASP", undated  
Box 5 Folder 2. Research Materials: "Favorite People", 2000, undated  
Box 5 Folder 3. Research Materials: "Grace" Clippings, undated  
Box 5 Folder 5. Research Materials: "General", 1993, undated  
Box 5 Folder 6. Research Materials: "General", undated  
Box 5 Folder 7. Research Materials: "History of Salado", undated  
Box 5 Folder 8. Research Materials: "Notes on Grace", undated  
Box 5 Folder 13. Research Materials: "Modeling", undated  
Box 5 Folder 16. Research Materials: "VASP files", undated  
Box 5 Folder 18. Research Materials: "Pat Boone", undated

Series 4: Scrapbooks. 1973-1987, undated

Summary Information
Photographic print

Administrative/Biographical History
This series includes multiple scrapbooks relating to Grace Jones’s life, including her store, experience as a WASP, and her trip to Japan. The scrapbooks have been scanned for preservation purposes and the original scrapbooks and clippings deaccessioned. All other materials that were contained in the scrapbooks have been filed under "additional materials." This series is in poor to good condition.

Item List
Box 6 Folder 1. Scrapbooks: "Scrapbook 1": Page 1-18 (1 of 4), 1987  
Box 6 Folder 3. Scrapbooks: "Scrapbook 1": Page 41-51 (3 of 4), 1987  
Box 6 Folder 4. Scrapbooks: "Scrapbook 1": Page 52-65 (4 of 4), 1987  
Box 6 Folder 6. Scrapbooks: "Scrapbook 1": Additional Materials: Correspondence, 1987  

Summary Information
  Media
  Photographic print; Portrait photograph

Administrative/Biographical History
This series contains candid and professional photos of Grace Jones. Some were donated in organized research files, but contained only photographic materials, and thus have been placed in the subseries to this series, "Research Materials." Like the Research Materials series, Quadlander’s original folder titles have been preserved. The professional modeling photographs of Grace are divided into four major categories; commercial, which is a photo highlighting a product; fashion, a photo highlighting a lifestyle; editorial, a photo that tells a story; and portraits. Grace Jones’s professional photos are undated. This series is in average to excellent condition.

Series 6: Artifacts. undated

Administrative/Biographical History
This series includes photos of two artifacts related to Grace’s professional life and is in average condition.

Item List
Box 10. Folder 14. Artifacts: Wooden Appreciation Box, undated
Box 10. Folder 15. Artifacts: Copy of Leather Briefcase, undated

Series 7: Audio and Video Recordings. 1990-2001, undated

Summary Information
  Media
  Compact disk (CD); Video home system (VHS) tapes

Administrative/Biographical History
This series includes VHS tapes and one audio CD. Three of the recordings relate to Grace’s experience as a WASP, the other is a recording of “Grace’s Style Show.” This series is in good condition.

Item List
Box 11. Folder 3. Audio Video Recordings: VHS Recordings: “We Were WASP”, 1990
Box 11. Folder 4. Audio Video Recordings: VHS Recordings: “Grace’s Style Show”, undated

Series 8: Books. 1938-1983

Administrative/Biographical History
This series contains two books. One, Women Aloft, is about the WASPs. The second is the 1938 Baylor Round-Up, signed by all of Grace Jones’s classmates, including her future husband Tom Putnam. This series is in good condition.

Item List
Box 12. Folder 2. Books: Baylor Round-up, 1938