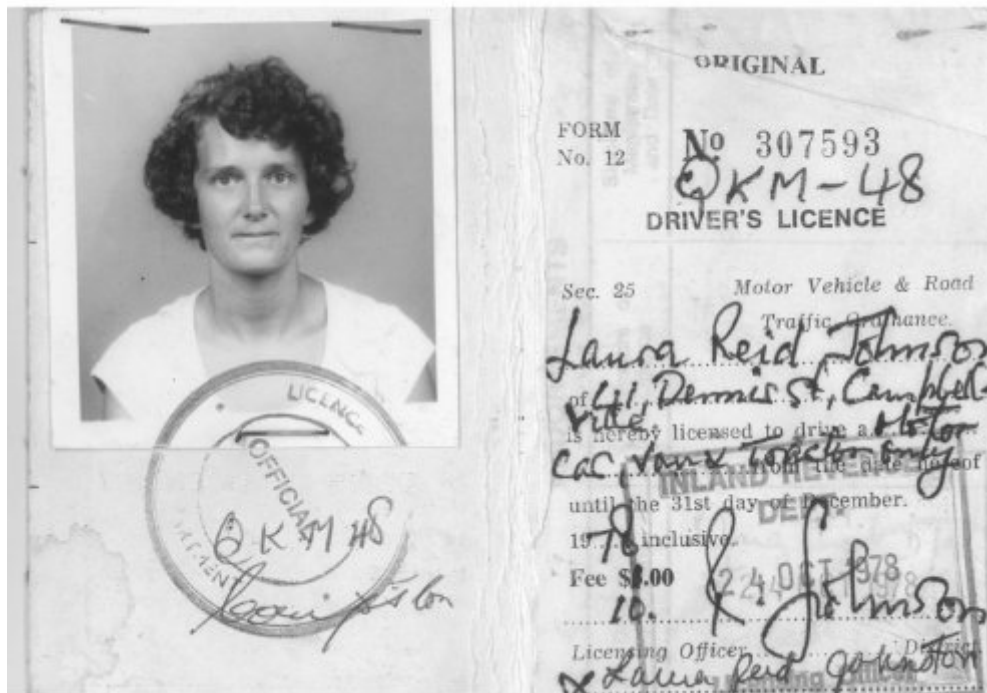


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# JONESTOWN SURVIVOR: An Insider's Look



## Synopsis

**LAURA JOHNSTON KOHL** Laura Johnston Kohl grew up as an activist in Washington, D.C., and watched as many of her heroes were assassinated in the 1960s. While she was in high school and college, John Kennedy, Bobby Kennedy, Martin Luther King, Malcolm X, and others were killed. While in college in Connecticut she continued her commitment to work for change and to make a difference. While exercising her civil rights to protest peacefully, she was tear-gassed while protesting the war in Viet Nam. After a brief marriage, a visit to Woodstock, and a stint working with the Black Panthers, she moved to California to join her sister. Soon after that, she was introduced to Peoples Temple and spent the next nine years in California and Guyana. She was away from Jonestown on the day when 913 of her friends and family died. The next twenty years were spent recovering, and rebuilding her life. For the first ten years, she lived in Synanon, a residential community. The following ten years, with her husband and young son, she began rebuilding her life. She earned her BA in philosophy/psychology, and then earned her California Teaching Credential. She also found some peace by becoming a Quaker. In the last ten years, she has become a public speaker about Peoples Temple and is on the Speakers' Bureau of the Jonestown Institute. She has been interviewed locally, nationally, and internationally on television, on radio, in newspapers, in documentaries, and for research papers. She has written many articles about the details of life in Peoples Temple and her survival. She is an annual speaker at the Communal Studies Association Conferences, and her scholarly work is published in their Communal Societies Journal. Last March 2010, she published her own book, **JONESTOWN SURVIVOR: An Insider's Look**. She continues to make frequent speeches locally and nationally about her experiences. She and her family live in San Diego, California, and she is a bilingual public school teacher and Quaker. Her website is [www.jonestownsurvivor.com](http://www.jonestownsurvivor.com). Laura Johnston Kohl can be reached through her website, and appreciates questions and feedback. **JONESTOWN SURVIVOR: An Insider's Look** in print is available on .com. (Publisher iUniverse)

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

My friend wrote this. It's beautifully written. Doesn't focus on the horror, or the insanity of Jim Jones. What it does do is it gives a voice and a life to each of her beloved friends that she lost, as well as those who survived. It's like a love letter to them. It's a tribute to a group of wonderful human beings who had a vision of leading a better life through community. The author is probably the strongest person I know and has since made a wonderful life, raised a family, teaches children, was nominated Teacher of the Year, is an activist and lectures everywhere in her "spare" time. This in spite of the years of heartache and grief afterwards, she never gave up, and she never slows down.

I have read several books on this subject and I decided to read one more. It was an interesting read, and well written. Laura Johnston Kohl was a member of this cult and so we had an insiders point of view. But she seems to have a different point of view on life at Jonestown. She was a little defensive about the negativity surrounding Jim Jones and his followers. She believes that the members were not brainwashed and they willingly laid down their life for the cause. I was very surprised that she didn't include much about Jim Jones drug use or mental illness. And she portrayed life there as a good life. She happened to be in Georgetown when the suicides took place and she did give some insight about she and fellow survivors coming to terms with what had happened, and what it took to move on with their lives.

Ms. Kohl has written of her experiences as a member of the Peoples Temple and Synanon; however, there is nothing new to be learned about either organization in this book. What is surprising about this book as compared to books and articles written by other survivors is how vastly different Ms. Kohl's memories are. Indeed, Ms. Kohl obviously considers her years with Peoples Temple and Synanon to have been happy and fulfilling, and the whole point of the book seems to be presenting both Peoples Temple and Synanon in a highly favorable light. Even allowing for the fact that Ms. Kohl may simply have chosen to concentrate on the positive rather than the negative, one wonders how her recollections are poles apart from other survivors.

I tried to get through this book and understand. But remembering that time, I'll never understand how anyone could stand for this kind of horror show.

A perspective of the Jonestown ordeal you don't often hear. An honest account of someone who truly loved her life and friends in Peoples Temple. It went very well with the other books I've read about Jim Jones and Peoples Temple.

Written by one of the survivors of Jonestown, this book provides tremendous insight into the people who dedicated their lives to Jones' vision of a utopian society that, as we know, ended in the tragic loss of hundreds of lives.

I have read many books, etc. about Jonestown. Found this interesting to get information/perspective of some of other survivors telling about not only the immediate aftermath for them, but in current times.

Not as good as other Jonestown books, but I still loved it. Good service.

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