

Special Collections and
University Archives
UMass Amherst Libraries 

Stephen Josephs Photograph Collection

Digital

1972-1978

13 images

Call no.: PH 013



[About SCUA](#)

[SCUA home](#)

[Credo digital](#)

[Scope](#)

[Inventory](#)

[Admin info](#)

[Download](#)

[xml version](#)

[print version \(pdf\)](#)



[Read collection overview](#)

The Guru Ram Das Ashram was founded in Montague, Massachusetts, in 1972 by Steve Josephs under the inspiration of Yogi Bhajan. Affiliated with the 3HO (Healthy Happy Holy Organization) and the Sikh Dharma Brotherhood, the ashram provided instruction in Kundalini Yoga and Tantric meditation, and at one point, there were as many as 21 residents of the house. United in an arranged marriage by Yogi Bhajan in 1972, the Josephs (then called Gurushabd Singh and Gurushabd Kaur) left the ashram in 1983.

The thirteen digital images in the Stephen Josephs Collection document the early years of the Guru Ram Das Ashram, and its founders Stephen and Alice Josephs (Gurushabd Singh and Gurushabd Kaur). The collection includes images of Yogi Bhajan, the Josephs, and their infant son Sean (Sat Narayan Singh).

See similar SCUA collections:

Famous Long Ago

Intentional communities

Photographs

Religion

Spiritual change

Background on Stephen Josephs

In 1969, Harbhajan Singh Khalsa introduced Kundalini Yoga to the United States. A charismatic former public servant from India, Yogi Bhajan, as he was known, taught the yoga of the Sikh gurus, centering his practice on self-discipline and self-awareness, but emphasizing worldly engagement, rather than ascetic withdrawal. Through his 3HO (Healthy, Happy, Holy) organization, Yogi Bhajan rapidly built an avid following among the so-called hippies, offering a holistic spiritual alternative to the prevalent drug culture. In the five years that followed the Yogi's arrival in the States, more than one hundred yoga ashrams were established throughout North America and Europe, to spread his teachings.

Established by Stephen Josephs (Gurushabd Singh) in 1972, the Guru Ram Das Ashram quickly became a regional center for instruction in Kundalini Yoga and Tantric meditation. After attending a course in Tantric Yoga in Paeonia, Colorado, Josephs acquired a house for his new ashram on Taylor Hill Road in rural Montague, Massachusetts, and almost immediately began to attract students, many of whom lived communally on site. Their day, Josephs recalls, began at 3.30 AM, with two and a half hours of rigorous yogic practice and music, followed by meditation and the work of the day. At its peak, the ashram had as many as twenty one residents, whom the ashram was able to feed for a mere dollar a day per person.

Josephs met his wife Alice (Gurushabd Kaur) in 1972, while the two were attending a tantric yoga course in Washington, D.C. During that course, Yogi Bhajan singled the couple out and called them onto the stage, saying he saw an arc of white light between them. After asking the audience if he had permission to engage them in marriage, and finding enthusiastic approval, the Yogi married the Josephs four days later. Although they left the ashram in 1983, their marriage has endured.

Josephs completed his doctorate in education At UMass Amherst in 1974 for a study of the Guru Ram Das Ashram, *Education of the spirit; the dynamics underlying personal and spiritual growth into spiritual commune*.

Scope of collection

The thirteen digital images in the Stephen Josephs Collection document the early years of the Guru Ram Das Ashram, and its founders Stephen and Alice Josephs (Gurushabd Singh and Gurushabd Kaur). The collection includes images of Yogi Bhajan, the Josephs, and their infant son Sean (Sat Narayan Singh).

Inventory

Yogi Bhajan, leader of 3HO, taken at a Tantric Yoga Course
ca.1972
Digital



Gurushabd Singh (Stephen Josephs), ca.1972



Gurushabd Singh, Gurushabd Kaur with Sat Narayan Singh in the middle (now Stephen, Alice and Sean Josephs)
ca.1972
Digital



Gurushabd Singh, Gurushabd Kaur with Sat Narayan Singh in the middle (now Stephen, Alice and Sean Josephs)
ca.1972
Digital



Livtar Singh Khalsa at the recording of "Jewels from the East," an audio tape album by the Khalsa String Band
ca.1972
Digital



Livtar Singh Khalsa at the recording of "Jewels from the East," an audio tape album by the Khalsa String Band
ca.1972
Digital



Two unidentified women singing
ca.1972
Digital



Gurushabd Singh and Kaur
ca.1972
Digital



Gurushabd Singh and Kaur
ca.1972
Digital



Guru Ram Das Ashram, Taylor Hill Road, Montague, Mass.

ca.1972

Digital



Gurushabd Singh (Stephen Josephs)

ca.1972

Digital



Gurushabd Singh (Stephen Josephs)

ca.1972

Digital



Gurushabd Singh (Stephen Josephs) playing guitar
ca.1972
Digital



Gurushabd Kaur and child (Alice Josephs)
ca.1972
Digital



Administrative information

Access

The collection is open for research.

Provenance

Acquired from Tom Fels, 2008.

Processing Information

Processed by Dex Haven, November 2009.

Digitized content

Digitized versions of the images in this collection have been added to SCUA's online repository, Credo.

Related Material

Josephs' dissertation on the Guru Ram Das Ashram, *Education of the spirit; the dynamics underlying personal and spiritual growth into spiritual commune*, is available for circulation through the Du Bois Library, call number 2398.

Language:

English

Copyright and Use (More information)

Cite as: Stephen Josephs Photograph Collection (PH 013). Special Collections and University Archives, University of Massachusetts Amherst Libraries.

Search terms

Subjects

Ashrams--Massachusetts--Photographs.

Collective settlements--Massachusetts--Photographs.

Guru Ram Das Ashram (Montague, Mass.)--Photographs.

Harbhajan Singh Khalsa, Yogiji.

Josephs, Alice.

Montague (Mass.)--Photographs.

Sikh gurus--Photographs.

Contributors

Josephs, Stephen. [main entry]

Genres and formats

Photographs.

Link to similar SCUA collections

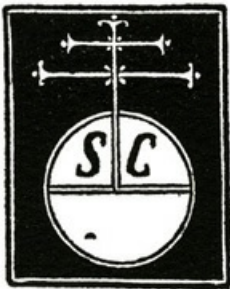
Famous Long Ago

Intentional communities

Photographs

Religion

Spiritual change



Special Collections & University Archives

University Libraries : UMass Amherst

154 Hicks Way : Amherst, Mass. 01003-9275

Ph. 413-545-7282 (545-SCUA)

