
Guide to the Friends of Perfection Records

Collection number: MS 4008

California Historical Society

North Baker Research Library
San Francisco, California

Contact Information:

- California Historical Society
- North Baker Research Library
- 678 Mission Street
- San Francisco, California 94105-4014
- Phone: (415) 357-1848, ext. 220
- Fax: (415) 357-1850
- Email: reference@calhist.org
- URL: <http://www.californiahistoricalsociety.org/>

Processed by:

Jennifer Schaffner

Date Completed:

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Encoded by:

James Lake

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Descriptive Summary

Title: Friends of Perfection Records

Collection number: MS 4008

Origination: Friends of Perfection

Extent: 4 boxes, 1 flat box, 1 trunk

Repository: California Historical Society, North Baker Library

San Francisco, California 94105-4014

Language: English

Donor Info

The Sutter Street Commune donated the Friends of Perfection collection to California Historical Society in 1973. Known informally as the Sutter Street Commune or the Scott Street Commune, depending on the street on which they lived, this intentional community used the name Friends of Perfection for things like sales receipts, information requests or legalities, such as the deed to CHS for the collection. The "front" name, Friends of Perfection, derived from the commune's interest in the Oneida Community and the philosophy of Perfectionism of John Humphrey Noyes. This interest is reflected, for example, in "Communal Archaeology," the cover article (p.1) of *Kaliflower* Vol. 3, No. 1 (May 6, 1971). "Kaliflower," as the Friends of Perfection were often known, also derived their practices of complex marriage, third persons, criticism, and self-criticism from Noyes and the Oneida Community.

Access

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Access Points

Kaliflower
Free Print Shop
Sutter Street Commune
Diggers
Communal living--California--San Francisco
Hippies--California--San Francisco
Underground press--California--San Francisco
Underground literature--California--San Francisco
Experimental theater--California--San Francisco
San Francisco (Calif.)--History--20th century
Free material
New Left--California--San Francisco

History

The Free Print Shop, one of several work projects of the Sutter Street Commune, published the intercommunal newsletter *Kaliflower* in San Francisco from April 24, 1969 through June 22, 1972. The Sutter Street Commune was one of several hundred communes in the 1960s in the San Francisco Bay Area. The Free Print Shop was in the basement of the commune's Victorian house in the redevelopment-owned area of the city, near where Japantown now stands.

Part 1: The Sutter Street Commune and the Diggers: The Sutter Street Commune consciously adopted the Diggers' "Free philosophy." The Diggers (1966-1968) were one of the groups in San Francisco's Haight-Ashbury District, a center of 1960s counterculture. Often cloaked in anonymity, the Diggers took their name from the original English Diggers (1649-1650), who had promulgated a vision of society free from private property and all forms of buying and selling.

The Diggers combined street theater, direct action, and art happenings in their social agenda of creating a Free City. Their most famous activities revolved around distributing free food every day in Golden Gate Park and distributing "surplus energy" at a series of Free Stores. Digger events, editorial comments of the day, pronouncements, manifestos and miscellaneous communications were broadcast through broadsides, leaflets and posters distributed by hand on Haight Street. The Sutter Street Commune set out to implement the blueprint for action that the Diggers had outlined a few months earlier in 1967.

Part 2: The Free Print Shop and *Kaliflower*: The announcement of the opening of the Free Print Shop was printed on silk cloth-faced paper, which the commune obtained from a large paper company in San Francisco that sold odd lots of paper very cheaply. Over the next several years, the Free Print Shop published a variety of materials, including flyers for other communal groups, free services, ecology groups, free arts groups, and the occasional political protest. California Historical Society's collection includes hundreds of Free Print Shop broadsides and flyers on various topics, such as "Free the Presidio 27," "Bring Huey Home," "Hells Angels Party," "The Non-Violent Revolution of India a talk," and "Gay Liberation Now."

In the spring of 1969, the Sutter Street Commune began weekly publication of the intercommunal newspaper *Kaliflower*. The name comes from Kali Yuga, the Hindu name for last and most violent age of humankind. The title suggests a flower growing out of the ashes of destruction. For three years *Kaliflower* circulation grew, until nearly three hundred communes received *Kaliflower* every Thursday. The burgeoning circulation compromised ideals of staying small, local and anonymous, so publication was eventually suspended.

"*Kaliflower* Day," as the name by which Thursdays became known, was the day of the week when *Kaliflower* was bound and distributed to all the other communes. In the beginning, each commune that received *Kaliflower* had a plywood board located in a communal space, where the messengers would hand-deliver the *Kaliflowers*. California Historical Society has one of the plywood boards used for delivery. A bamboo tube attached to the board held any free messages waiting for the deliverer to pick up. Members from other households would show up at Sutter Street, and later Scott Street when the commune moved. They spent the morning binding *Kaliflower*, using a Japanese sewing method

of side stitching.

Commune members lived in two successive Victorian houses for their first seven years. In the 1960s in San Francisco, the Redevelopment Agency tore down many Victorian buildings in Japantown and the Western Addition. Commune members would go into the old Victorians and salvage as much as they could. California Historical Society's copies of *Kaliflower* were donated in an old Japanese steamer trunk salvaged from one of these abandoned houses.

Each *Kaliflower* was printed on a Chief 15 and bound by hand. Every ten weeks or so, a commune member would gather a sequence of the issues and put them into an elaborately decorated envelope. For example, volume 4 has 7 issues, which are organized in order in an envelope silk-screened with images depicting the Free Bakery and Free Food in three colors.

Kaliflower became an important mode of communication among the communes. It was common for people who delivered *Kaliflower* to come back with stories of travelling from one commune to another and being fêted at each in various ways. The messengers would pick up announcements and ads -- always free ads -- that would appear in the next week's issue. California Historical Society also has a set of broadsides, posters and other printed matter distributed with *Kaliflower* from time to time.

Scope and Content

This collection consists of a complete collection of the first series of the publication *Kaliflower*, with some supplements, and an incomplete collection of other products of the Free Print Shop. There are also some miscellaneous related items, including one of the original *Kaliflower* clipboards, and the trunk in which the archives were delivered to California Historical Society.

Related Collections

California Historical Society also has a related manuscript collection, MS 3159, on the Haight Street Diggers, which is closely related to the Friends of Perfection collection. There are also some new series issues of *Kaliflower*, printed at later dates for special occasions, some of which are among California Historical Society's collections.

Series 1: *Kaliflower*

Additional Note

The arrangement of the *Kaliflower* collection follows as closely as possible the provenance of the materials as the creators arranged them in the trunk. The silk-screened folder covers have been emptied, protected in mylar sleeves, and placed before the first issue of the sequence of *Kaliflower* issues that they contained.

Box Box 1 ,	<i>Kaliflower</i>, vol. 1, nos. 1-10 (April 24, 1969-June, 1969)
Folder Folder 1	
Folder Folder 2	<i>Kaliflower</i>, vol. 1, nos. 11-20 (July 3, 1969-Sept. 4, 1969)
Folder Folder 3	<i>Kaliflower</i>, vol. 1, nos. 21-30 (Sept. 11, 1969-Nov. 13, 1969)
Folder Folder 4	<i>Kaliflower</i>, vol. 1, nos. 31-40 ([Nov. 20, 1969]-Jan. 22, 1970)
Folder Folder 5	<i>Kaliflower</i>, vol. 1, nos. 41-52½ (Jan. 29, 1970-April 23, 1970)
Folder Folder 6	<i>Kaliflower</i>, vol. 2, nos. 1-10 (April 30, 1970-[July 2, 1970])
Folder Folder 7	<i>Kaliflower</i>, vol. 2, nos. 11-20 ([July 9, 1970]-Sept. 10, 1970)
Folder Folder 8	<i>Kaliflower</i>, vol. 2, nos. 21-30 (Sept. 17, 1970-Nov. 19, 1970)
Folder Folder 9	<i>Kaliflower</i>, vol. 2, nos. 31-40 (Nov. 26, 1970-Jan. 28, 1971)
Box Box 2 ,	<i>Kaliflower</i>, vol. 2, nos. 41-52 (Feb. 4, 1971-April 22, 1971)
Folder Folder 10	
Folder Folder 11	<i>Kaliflower</i>, vol. 3, nos. 1-14 (May 6, 1971-July 29, 1971)
Folder Folder 12	<i>Kaliflower</i>, vol. 3, nos. 15-26 (Aug. 12, 1971-Oct. 25, 1971)
Folder Folder 13	<i>Kaliflower</i>, vol. 3, nos. 27-39 (Nov. 4, 1971-Jan. 27, 1972)
Folder Folder 14	<i>Kaliflower</i>, vol. 3, nos. 40-52 (Feb. 3, 1972-April 27, 1972)
Folder Folder 15	<i>Kaliflower</i>, vol. 4, nos. 1-7 (May 11, 1972-June 22, 1972)

Series 2: Free Print Shop Archives

Additional Note

Each of the items has a small pencil notation included by the creators, often on the back of the piece, which indicates the number and the date of the piece.

Box Box 3 , **"Print-outs" [catalogue raisonné] "Aug. 1968-Dec. 1972" This is a list of the complete oeuvre of the Free Print**
Folder Folder 16 **Shop, compiled by the creators, including the title and dates of many items no longer available, or not included**
 in the CHS collection.

Folder Folder 17 **[nos. 1-13] 1968**
Folder Folder 18 **[nos. 14-124] 1969**
Folder Folder 19 **[nos. 125-164] 1970**
Folder Folder 20 **[nos. 165-213] 1971**
Folder Folder 21 **[nos. 214-286] 1972**

Series 3: Miscellaneous

Box Box 4 **Oversize *Kaliflower* supplement, rolled**
Tube in which supplement and oversize pieces were delivered, with original identification notations

Box Box 5 **Clipboard, with CHS contract clipped in as if it were an issue of *Kaliflower***
Oversize pieces on fabric -- "Our Lady of the Rubble," "Kali over Uncle Sam"
Newspaper wrappers for oversize pieces, with identification notations

Folder Folder 22 ***Kaliflower* broadsides, supplements and posters (oversize) -- original identification notations in pencil**

Folder Folder 23 **Newspaper folder for four *Kaliflower* supplements**

Folder Folder 24 **Four *Kaliflower* supplements**
Original folder of the Free Print Shop archives

Series 4: The trunk