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## Guide to the Paul Kagan Papers, 1911-1971

### Collection number: MS 3121

California Historical Society

North Baker Research Library  
San Francisco, California

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### Descriptive Summary

**Title:** Paul Kagan Papers,

**Date (inclusive):** 1911-1971

**Collection number:** MS 3121

**Creator:** Kagan, Paul, 1943

**Extent:** 2 ft.

**Repository:** California Historical Society, North Baker Library  
San Francisco, California 94105-4014

**Language:** English

#### Access

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#### Preferred Citation

[Identification of item], Paul Kagan Papers. MS 3121, California Historical Society, North Baker Research Library.

#### History

The Paul Kagan Papers consist largely of documents produced by several California Utopian communities of the early twentieth century. The individuals in these communities strove for a meaningful, humanistic approach to life, which centered on the integral relationship between the

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individual and the community. Extensively represented are the Llano del Rio community and the Theosophical Society at Krotona, with additional theosophical material from the Halcyon People's Temple, Point Loma Publications, Theosophical University Press(Altadena), Pisgah, and the East-West Cultural Center. Miscellaneous items from an unidentified organization called Fountaingrove are also included.

The Llano del Rio colony was a worker's corporation founded in 1914 by Job Harriman, a Marxist lawyer, as a communal alternative to what he viewed as the selfish competition and materialism of capitalist America. The community began as an agricultural commune in the southern California desert, but expanded to include other industries in its drive for self-sufficiency. One of the enterprises run by the members was a printing press, whose publications were used both as in-house newsletters and outreach proselytizers. As a result of financial and political difficulties, the colony relocated in Leesville, LA. in 1917 where it thrived for some years.

Madame H.P.Blavatsky founded the theosophical Society in 1875, with its headquarters in Adyar, India. Under her guidance, the society's members strove to form a nucleus dedicated to Universal Brotherhood; the study of religion, philosophy and science; and, the exploration of unexplained phenomena. The Theosophists use of psychic phenomena, occultism, and spiritualism in their search for Universal Truth made them constant subjects of controversy and suspicion for the outside world.

The Krotona Institute was one of the American offshoots of the Theosophical Society, a Western Adyar dedicated to theosophical principles. The Institute served as a resident centre for education and training. Members of the Society secured the building site in the Hollywood hills in 1912, and were able to open the school the same year. The centre grew in size and popularity and remained a hiatus for American Theosophists.

Another branch of the main Theosophical Society was the Temple of the People at Halcyon, CA. William Dower founded the organization in 1898 as a result of a leadership dispute in the official American section of the Theosophical Society. The Temple members, too, considered themselves a nucleus for the Universal Community, and as guides to the hidden knowledge of human origin and its destiny. The town of Halcyon functioned as a religious commune where residents received spiritual support while they worked in the surrounding areas.

The Theosophical University Press and Point Loma Publications are reflections of the same theosophical spirit in both tone and content. Apparently the publications from these presses were not connected to specific communities, but support theosophic sympathizers who lived in the normal world.

Insufficient material prevents a history of the other three groups: Pisgah, East-West Cultural Center and Fountaingrove.

Paul Kagan, the collection's donator, used the materials for his book, *New World Utopias*, before donating them to the Historical Society.

### **Scope and Content**

The Paul Kagan collection consists almost entirely of publications, printed materials and newsletters published by each organization. Community members designed some of these for a general, interested audience and others only for their own edification. The various publications cover issues and concerns relating to the communities and their central themes. Inclusive, they span a time period from 1911-1971, with the bulk of the material published in the late teens and early twenties.

The Llano del Rio colonists' main publication was the *Western Comrade*, later changed to the *Internationalist*, a socialist monthly magazine intended for the general public. They also published a specialized magazine, the *Reconstructionist*, dedicated to the rebuilding of the south, which directed special attention to the denuded timber lands. To handle the more personal concerns of the colony, the members produced the *Llano Colonist*, *Colony News*, *American Cooperator*, *Colony Cooperator* and *Cooperation in Action*. The publishing staff distributed these newsletters to both members and prospective members. The *Colonist*, published by a former member of Llano, Walter Millsap, focuses on the larger subject of all cooperative communities. Additional Llano material includes photocopied ads seeking new members for the community; Llano community ordinances and tribunate minutes; and, a derogatory article on Llano's founder in the *Vanderbilt Weekly*.

The official magazine of the American section of the Theosophical Society is the *American Theosophist*, published at Krotona. Krotona residents used the *Theosophical Messenger* for news and items of interest to them only. Mme. Blavatsky wrote a set of outreach-oriented pamphlets in which she explains theosophy's basic tenets and *raison d'etre*. Additional materials include: photocopies of correspondence from the Society's President, Annie Besant, to the head of Krotona Institute, several form letters soliciting donations from members; various other pamphlets; a school catalogue for the Institute; and two term papers written by students, which provide interesting background information about the Institute.

The collection holds one of the People's Temple official magazine, the *Temple Artisan*. Guardian William Dower wrote several pamphlets, to instruct beginners in occultism and temple concepts. The rest of the material consists of in-house newsletters designed to inform residents and members of activities, news and personal items.

The Point Loma Publications newspaper documents what were current issues (1971-72) in theosophy within an editorial format. (the *Eclectic Theosophist*)

The Theosophic University Press published *Sunrise*, a non-sectarian collection of editorial articles geared to the discovery of fundamental principles.

The Pisgah folder contains a photocopy of the Pisgah Home Song Book, a group of religious songs.

Three monthly programs of the East-West Cultural Center list events and activities which were held at the center.

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The Fountaingrove folder consists of three unidentified photos (originals in photo collection) and a miscellaneous news clipping.

- Agriculture, Cooperative
- *American Theosophist*, 2/13-2/14, V1.14, #5,6,7,8 & V1.15,#3,7
- Besant, Annie
- Blavatsky, H.P.
- Collective settlements
- Cooperative Societies
- Dower, William
- East-West Cultural Center
- Eclectic Theosophist, 9/71-3-72. #5,8,9
- Fountaingrove
- Halcyon Temple of the People
- Harriman, Job
- *Internationalist*, 5/18-7/18. V.6,#1,2,3
- Krotona Institute
- *Llano Colonist*, 5/26-9/47
- Llano Del Rio Company
- Millsap, Walter
- Pisgah
- Point Loma Publications
- Religion, California (L.A. and Santa Barbara counties)
- Socialism--American
- Socialists--California
- Socialists--Louisiana
- *Sunrise*, 1/70-3/70
- Theosophical Society, American section
- *Theosophic Messenger*, 8/12-2/23
- Theosophical University Press
- *Western Comrade*, 9/15-4/18
- Utopias

Box 1, Folder 1 ***Western Comrade*, V.3,#5,10,11,12; 9/15-5/16**

Folder 2 ***Western Comrade*, V.4,#7,9,10,11,12; V.5,#1,2,3,4,5; 11/16-9/17**

Folder 3 ***Llano Colonist*, V.9,33; 11/16&4/17**

Folder 4 ***Nevada Colony News*, V.1; 3/17**

Folder 5 ***Western Comrade*, V.5,#8-9,10,11,12; 1/18-4/18**

Folder 6 ***Internationalist*, V.6,#1,2,3; 5/18-7/18**

Folder 7 ***Reconstructionist*, V.1,#1; 8/18**

Folder 8 ***Colony Cooperator*, V.1,#3,4,5,6,7,8; 8/18-2/19**

Folder 9 ***Colony News*, V.1#6, V.2,#10,12, V.3,#3,5,6,7; 11/19-12/21**

Folder 10 ***American Cooperator*, V.19,#2,3,4,5; 2/22-5/22**

- Folder 11      ***Cooperation in Action, V.3,#32***
- Folder 12      ***Colonist,; 8/60***
- Folder 13      ***Gateway to Freedom and Farm Sites(pamphlets); n.d.***
- Folder 14      ***Llano ads in Western Comrade(photocopied); 6/14-7/22***
- Folder 15      ***Misc. documents, Llano; 12/14&4/15***
- Folder 16      ***Misc., Llano; 10/25***
- Box 2, Box flat b ***Llano Colonist, 5/26-2/35***  
**Physical Description:** (10 issues)
- Industrial Democral, 12/35-12/36**  
**Physical Description:** (6 issues)
- Box 3, Folder 17 ***Correspondence and Form Letters, Krotona; 5/1/11-8/25/24***
- Folder 18      ***American Theosophist, V.14,#5,6,7,8; 2/13-4/14***
- Folder 19      ***American Theosophist, V.15,#3,7,***
- Folder 20      ***Theosophic Messenger, V.10,#9, V.13,#10, V.1,#4, V.2,#7, V.6,#9,; 8/12-2/23***
- Folder 21      ***U.L.T. Pamphlets, #1-36; n.d.***
- Folder 22      ***Misc. Publications, Krotona***
- Folder 23      ***Misc.and Clippings, Krotona***
- Box 4, Folder 24 ***Form Letters and Misc. Publications, Halcyon***
- Folder 25      ***Eclectic Theosophist, #5,8,9; 9/71,1/72,3/72***
- Folder 26      ***Sunrise, #4,5,6,19; 1/70-3/70***
- Folder 27      ***Pisgah, Misc.***
- Folder 28      ***East West Cultural Center, Programs; 10/71,2/72,3/72***
- Folder 29      ***Fountaingrove, Misc.***