Title: The Catholic Ladder Collection  
Identifier/Call Number: MS.841  
Contributing Institution: Autry National Center, Braun Research Library  
Language of Material: English  
Physical Description: 0.1 linear feet (1 folder)  
Date (inclusive): circa 1932-circa 1952  
Abstract: This is a collection of manuscripts and an illustration regarding "The Catholic Ladder." Materials are from circa 1932 to circa 1952.  
creator: Bagley, Clarence, 1843-1932  
Historical note  ‘Catholic ladder’ is a general term given to pictorial catechisms that featured vertical sequences of pictures as pathways to Heaven. They transcended barriers of language and culture and closely followed the teaching styles of Saints Peter, Paul and Augustine by presenting Christian beliefs as concise and tangible glimpses of God in world history. The ladders originated in North America from the hand-crafted sticks used by 17-18th century Jesuits and Native American faithful and evolved into mass-produced charts used to evangelize in oral and visual societies worldwide. As they developed, these aids increasingly used sequences of pictures with vivid colors and detailed graphics from the Bible and captions or companion narratives. Father Francis Norbert Blanchet created the Catholic ladder in the present-day state of Washington in 1839. It began as a stick carved for Native American audiences, which he quickly transposed to paper and revised continuously. He published several versions (e.g.1839-1843, 1856), which grew gradually in size and complexity from 1843 to 1860. The ladder has 40 horizontal bars represent the 40 centuries B. C. The 33 dots represent the years of Christ's life on earth. The 18 bars represent the 18 centuries A. D. The 42 dots represent the 42 succeeding years.  
Scope and Contents  This is a collection of manuscripts and an illustration regarding "The Catholic Ladder." Manuscripts include a typed copy of "Early Catholic Missions in Old Oregon" volume two and "The Catholic Ladder," both edited by Clarence B. Bagley, Lawman & Hanford Company, Seattle, Washington, 1932; and photograph prints of negatives taken of seven pages from The Key to the Catholic Ladder; containing a sketch of the Christian Religion and Universal History, Useful to all, with the authorization of the Archbishop of Oregon City, T. W. Strong, Printer, New York, 1859; a typed note from E. Huggins; and a print of "The Catholic Ladder." Materials are from circa 1932 to circa 1952.  
Preferred citation  The Catholic Ladder Collection, circa 1932-circa 1952, Braun Research Library Collection, Autry National Center, Los Angeles; MS.841.  
Processing history  Processed by Library staff before 1981. Finding aid completed by Holly Rose Larson, NHPRC Processing Archivist, 2012 December 11, made possible through grant funding from the National Historical Publications and Records Commissions (NHPRC).  
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Subjects and Indexing Terms  Catholic Church  Catholic ladder  Early Catholic Missions in Old Oregon