National Land for People Collection csf.1987.001

Finding aid prepared by Jessi Fishman and Adam Wallace
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The National Land for People (NLP) Collection measures 25 linear feet and dates from 1850 to 1991 (bulk 1972 to 1983). The collection is comprised of legislation and legal papers, land sales documentation, correspondence, financial statements and contracts, reports, scholastic papers, historical and background information, press releases, printed material including newsletters, brochures, propaganda, and campaign materials, maps, charts, newspaper and magazine issues and clippings, notes, photographs, books and journals, ledgers, and other assorted materials pertaining to the history and activities of the organization and some of its founding members. The collection is arranged in seven series, as described below.

The Reclamation, water and land issues series (1850-1984) represents the majority of the collection, measuring 16.4 linear feet, and is divided into five main sub-series, two of which can be further divided into sub-sub-series. The first sub-series is comprised of materials related to the United States Department of the Interior's Bureau of Reclamation projects and can be divided into three sub-sub-series: The first, the 1902 Reclamation Act, includes legislation, historical information, violations, NLP opinions, residency information, and materials from the Pacific Legal Foundation. The second, the Central Valley Project, including general information, materials regarding the San Luis Unit and its Westlands Water District land sales and land transactions, and materials regarding the Kings River and Kern County areas of California as well as other projects throughout the state. The third sub-sub series, the Bureau of Reclamation general includes the history and general use of water in California, and Bureau of Reclamation projects in cities in California not found in the Central Valley and in other states. The second sub-series is comprised of materials related to the Imperial Irrigation District within the Bureau of Reclamation of California. The third sub-series represents the Panoche Water District, also within the jurisdiction of California's Bureau of Reclamation. The fourth sub-series is comprised of land transactions and land sales that took place outside the Westlands Water District, including railroad company land grants and land sales; and the fifth sub-series pertains to other states' reclamation and water issues and assorted other water and land issues.

The Family versus corporate farms series (1947-1981) measures 20.5 inches and can be divided into three sub-series. The first pertains to legislation and family farm acts, the second to general information and economics of small versus large farm enterprises, and the third to corporate farms and scandals that took place in California and the United States between 1962 and 1981.

The Legislation and politics series (1865-1981) is composed of 12.5 inches of materials relating to hearings, testimonies, and legislation (one sub-series) as well as information pertaining to political figures and their viewpoints and opinions in California, Washington, D.C., and throughout the United States.

The fourth series, entitled Other National Land for People issues (1891-1991), is comprised of fourteen sub-series in alphabetical order, all of which pertain to activities undertaken by NLP throughout its existence. The series measures 5.25 linear feet, and its subspecies are: air quality; activism and community organizing; agriculture in general and agribusiness; appropriate technology; associations and organizations; California projects; chemical farming and pesticides; co-ops and cooperative farms and funds; education; farm labor and farm mechanization; land issues including land ownership, reform, trusts, use planning, and farmland preservation; NLP general and historical information as well as materials pertaining to contacts made throughout the country and world; NLP's creations and printed material developed throughout its existence;
and power and energy.

The **Rural community development** series (1972-1982) represents 6.5 inches of the collection and includes reports, printed material, and correspondence pertaining to community ownership, economics of agricultural development, and other related topics.

The sixth series, **International materials** (1965-1980), measures 1.5 inches and corresponds to foreign ownership of California and United States land as well as to Mexican agribusiness and legislation.

Finally, the seventh series, **Maps** (1973-1985) spans the remainder of the collection, and is housed in six map tubes. This series consists of maps related to land sales and purchases, as well as assessors and land classification maps.

**Related Materials**

See also:

The Giffen Inc. collection,1911-1983, Special Collections Research Center, Henry Madden Library, California State University, Fresno

The John Krebs collection, part of the Central Valley Political Archive, Henry Madden Library, California State University, Fresno.


The Charles (Chip) Pashayan, Jr. papers, 1977-1990, part of the Central Valley Political Archive, Henry Madden Library, California State University, Fresno.

The B. F. (Bernie) Sisk papers, 1955-1978, part of the Central Valley Political Archive, Henry Madden Library, California State University, Fresno.

The San Joaquin Valley farm labor collection, 1947-1974, online at http://www.oac.cdlib.org/findaid/ark:/13030/tf7199n8d8

The Shimeall (Eleanor) California water collection, 1972-1995 at the University of the Pacific, online at http://www.oac.cdlib.org/findaid/ark:/13030/tf711nb523

The Paul Schuster Taylor papers, 1660-1997, bulk 1895-1984 at the Bancroft Library at the University of California, Berkeley, online at http://www.oac.cdlib.org/findaid/ark:/13030/tf7489n98b


The Ben Yellen / Charles L. Smith correspondence at the Mandeville Special Collections Library at the University of California, San Diego, online at http://www.oac.cdlib.org/findaid/ark:/13030/tf0r29n721

**Historical Note**

National Land for People (NLP), founded under the leadership of George and Maia Ballis, Berge Bulbulian, and a handful of others, started in the 1950s under several different names, including Western Water Resources Council, before being incorporated as the National Land for People Foundation in 1974. George Ballis, a self-described "news reporter, news editor, community and union organizer, still photographer, film maker, organic gardener-farmer, shamanic guide, and teacher," from Faribault, Minnesota, lived in Chicago and San Francisco before accepting a position as labor editor for the *Valley Labor Citizen* newspaper in Fresno in 1953. In this position Ballis focused on covering the issues of farm labor and farm workers of the time. In 1965 Ballis worked as a part-time labor organizer for the AFL-CIO Agricultural Workers Organizing Committee (AWOC), which worked with the National Farm Workers Union, led by Cesar Chavez. It was also during this time that Ballis and Berge Bulbulian became active in community organizing and that Ballis became the office manager for B. F. Sisk, who was subsequently elected to the House of Representatives to represent Fresno. Ballis was soon put in contact with Paul Taylor in Berkeley, and they began organizing around the state's water and farm labor issues. They produced maps showing the land ownership trends in the new Westlands Water District, which included many farms of surprisingly large size, including one over 110,000 acres owned by the Southern Pacific Railroad Company.

This was important because the Newlands Reclamation Act, passed in 1902 to fund large irrigation projects for 16 states in the American west, stipulated that federally funded water could only be used by landholders who owned 160 acres of land or less. However, for decades, large, corporate farming enterprises, as well as the Bureau of Reclamation charged with enforcing the law, were ignoring this restriction. National Land for People used the information they had gathered and maps they had produced to bring a bill to the Senate to force the Bureau to enforce the Reclamation Act's excess land law and
break up the large farms and sell them in small parcels to farm workers.

George and Maia Ballis and National Land for People were organizing and gathering information in order to gain equality for working class people. At the same time, George Ballis was photographing farm worker conditions. He then started working with the Fresno Democratic Association, became president, and organized it into the second largest Democratic club in the state of California. When National Land for People became incorporated in 1974, Ballis and the others took their advocacy to Washington, D.C., trying court cases in an attempt to fight the injustices present in California farm labor and publicly-subsidized agriculture water. They succeeded in closing some of the loopholes in Reclamation law that allowed the Westlands Water District to remain exempt from the acreage limitations, but President Reagan thwarted National Land for People, promising that the excess land law would never be enforced. In the middle of the water fight, National Land for People started working with the University of California, Los Angeles, on a study about how the West side could be developed with small communities and small farms and succeed, and they organized farmer co-ops, consumer co-ops, and organic farm experiments. After the Reclamation Reform Act of 1982 raised the acreage limitation to 960, they realized that they would never win the big fight against the government and large, corporate farms, and so instead re-focused their energies on other initiatives. National Land for People converted over the course of the late 1970s and 1980s into Sun Mountain, George and Maia Ballis's artistic and environmental endeavor stressing eco-friendly technology, food and energy alternatives, organic gardening, community activism and organizing, and other related issues. George Ballis died in 2010. Maia Ballis continues the legacy of Sun Mountain in Tollhouse, California.

Processing information note

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Conditions Governing Access
Collection is open for research.

Conditions Governing Use
The library can only claim physical ownership of the collection. Users are responsible for satisfying any claimants of literary property.

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Immediate Source of Acquisition
The collection was donated by George and Maia Ballis in 1987.

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Clippings 1971, 1976-1983 and undated
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DBCP (di-bromochloropropane) 1977-1983 and undated
General Physical Description note: Box 24, Folder 22
4.7 Chemical farming and pesticides

4.8 Co-ops and cooperative farms/funds
   General Physical Description note: Box 24, Folders 23-26
   
   General 1974-1981 and undated
   General Physical Description note: Box 24, Folders 23-24
   
   Industry reports 1973-1975
   General Physical Description note: Box 24, Folder 25
   
   General Physical Description note: Box 24, Folder 26

4.9 Education
   General Physical Description note: Box 25, Folders 1-6
   
   Food education 1981-1983
   General Physical Description note: Box 25, Folders 1-2
   
   Children's Gardens info packet undated
   General Physical Description note: Box 25, Folder 3
   
   Water education 1974-1979 and undated
   General Physical Description note: Box 25, Folder 4
   
   Energy education 1968, 1981
   General Physical Description note: Box 25, Folder 5
   
   Other education 1977
   General Physical Description note: Box 25, Folder 6

4.10 Farm labor and mechanization
   General Physical Description note: Box 25, Folders 7-8
   
   General Physical Description note: Box 25, Folder 7
   
   Mechanization 1974, 1977-1980 and undated
   General Physical Description note: Box 25, Folder 8

4.11 Land issues (non-transactions)
   General Physical Description note: Box 25, Folders 9-21; Box 26, Folders 1-3
   
   Land ownership 1979-1981 and undated
   General Physical Description note: Box 25, Folder 9
   
   Land reform
   General Physical Description note: Box 25, Folders 10-12
4. Other National Land for People issues 1891-1991 and undated

4.11 Land issues (non-transactions)

   General Physical Description note: Box 25, Folders 10-11

Land reform in Mexico 1976, 1979 and undated
   General Physical Description note: Box 25, Folder 12

Land trusts
   General Physical Description note: Box 25, Folders 13-16

General 1975-1983 and undated
   General Physical Description note: Box 25, Folders 13-14

Printed material 1976, 1979-1984
   General Physical Description note: Box 25, Folder 15

Private options for land preservation report 1981
   General Physical Description note: Box 25, Folder 16

Land use planning 1924, 1972, 1976 and undated
   General Physical Description note: Box 25, Folders 17-18

Farmland preservation
   General Physical Description note: Box 25, Folders 19-21

   General Physical Description note: Box 25, Folder 19

   General Physical Description note: Box 25, Folder 20

   General Physical Description note: Box 25, Folder 21

Public land use 1974, 1977
   General Physical Description note: Box 26, Folders 1-3

4.12 NLP miscellaneous
   General Physical Description note: Box 26, Folders 4-26; Box 27, Folders 1-10

General 1977-1979 and undated
   General Physical Description note: Box 26, Folder 4

Land applications 1977-1978 and undated
   General Physical Description note: Box 26, Folder 5

Handwritten history and notes 1977 and undated
   General Physical Description note: Box 26, Folder 6

Fundraisers 1954, 1973-1980 and undated
   General Physical Description note: Box 26, Folders 7-8

Pro-NLP materials 1975-1979 and undated
   General Physical Description note: Box 26, Folder 9
Contacts, lists of names and correspondence
General Physical Description note: Box 26, Folders 10-26; Box 27, Folders 1-2

Fresno area 1975, 1978-1983 and undated
General Physical Description note: Box 26, Folder 10

California's Central Valley 1975-1976, 1979 and undated
General Physical Description note: Box 26, Folder 11

Los Angeles 1975-1982 and undated
General Physical Description note: Box 26, Folder 12

Los Angeles groups 1963, 1977-1980 and undated
General Physical Description note: Box 26, Folder 13

San Jose and Palo Alto 1976-1981, 1984 and undated
General Physical Description note: Box 26, Folder 14

Grass Valley 1979-1982
General Physical Description note: Box 26, Folder 15

Chico 1978-1979 and undated
General Physical Description note: Box 26, Folder 16

Bay Area 1976-1984 and undated
General Physical Description note: Box 26, Folder 17

Sacramento, Davis and Northern California 1975-1980 and undated
General Physical Description note: Box 26, Folder 18

Santa Cruz and North coastal areas 1976-1984 and undated
General Physical Description note: Box 26, Folder 19

Washington, D.C. 1977-1979 and undated
General Physical Description note: Box 26, Folder 20

Alabama undated
General Physical Description note: Box 26, Folder 21

Alaska 1980
General Physical Description note: Box 26, Folder 22

Arizona 1978-1982 and undated
General Physical Description note: Box 26, Folder 23

Arkansas 1979
General Physical Description note: Box 26, Folder 24

Colorado 1979-1980 and undated
General Physical Description note: Box 26, Folder 25

International 1976-1979 and undated
General Physical Description note: Box 26, Folder 26
4. Other National Land for People issues 1891-1991 and undated

4.12 NLP miscellaneous

- **People who wrote letters to the Bureau of Reclamation list undated**
  General Physical Description note: Box 27, Folder 1

- **Phone tree contacts 1979-1980 and undated**
  General Physical Description note: Box 27, Folder 2

- **Original newspaper articles on or about NLP 1965, 1974-1982 and undated**
  General Physical Description note: Box 27, Folders 3-4

- **Fresno Bee clippings 1979-1980**
  General Physical Description note: Box 27, Folders 4-5

- **Clippings on drought 1976-1978 and undated**
  General Physical Description note: Box 27, Folder 6

- **Drought info 1977 and undated**
  General Physical Description note: Box 27, Folder 7

- **San Francisco Examiner clippings 1976, 1979-1980 and undated**
  General Physical Description note: Box 27, Folder 8

- **Assorted NLP correspondence 1976, 1979-1980 and undated**
  General Physical Description note: Box 27, Folder 9

  General Physical Description note: Box 27, Folder 10

4.13 NLP publications

- **Printed material 1976-1982, 1987 and undated**
  General Physical Description note: Box 27, Folder 11

- **NLP newsletters 1975-1986**
  General Physical Description note: Box 27, Folders 12-14

- **Sun Mountain newsletters 1988-1991**
  General Physical Description note: Box 28, Folder 1

- **NLP and Sun Mountain bulletins 1980, 1983-1987 and undated**
  General Physical Description note: Box 28, Folder 2

- **NLP direct marketing and farmers markets information 1980-1982 and undated**
  General Physical Description note: Box 28, Folder 3

4.14 Power and energy

- **Central Valley projects 1951, 1974-1978, 1982**
  General Physical Description note: Box 28, Folder 4
4. Other National Land for People issues 1891-1991 and undated

4.14 Power and energy

Western Area Power Administration 1978
General Physical Description note: Box 28, Folder 5

General Physical Description note: Box 28, Folder 6

Helms hydroelectric project clippings 1981-1983
General Physical Description note: Box 28, Folder 7

Assorted materials 1891-1930 and undated
General Physical Description note: Box 28, Folder 8

Consumers 1981-1982 and undated
General Physical Description note: Box 28, Folder 9

Alternative energy 1976-1979 and undated
General Physical Description note: Box 28, Folder 10

5. Rural community development 1972-1982
General Physical Description note: Box 28, Folders 11-19

General Physical Description note: Box 28, Folders 11-12

Edward M. Kirshner reports
General Physical Description note: Box 28, Folders 13-16

Community ownership and Community Reinvestment Act 1975, 1981 and undated
General Physical Description note: Box 28, Folder 13

A rural new town for the west side of the San Joaquin valley 1975
General Physical Description note: Box 28, Folder 14

Demographic, economic and fiscal impacts of alternative Westlands agricultural development scenarios 1978
General Physical Description note: Box 28, Folder 15

Westlands rural development project 1976-1977 and undated
General Physical Description note: Box 28, Folder 16

Other reports 1972-1973, 1975-1977 and undated
General Physical Description note: Box 28, Folders 17-19

General Physical Description note: Box 28, Folders 20-21

Foreign ownership of California and U.S. land 1977-1978
General Physical Description note: Box 28, Folder 20

General Physical Description note: Box 28, Folder 21

General Physical Description note: Tubes 1-6
Central Valley Project-San Luis Unit land classification 1978
   General Physical Description note: Tube 1

Assessor's map, County of Fresno, CA undated
   General Physical Description note: Tube 2

Westlands Water District, Fresno, CA, ownership map 1-Southern Pacific contracts 1976-1985
   General Physical Description note: Tube 3

Westlands Water District, Fresno, CA, district boundary undated
   General Physical Description note: Tube 4

Westlands Water District, ownership map 1973
   General Physical Description note: Tube 5

Fresno-Clovis Metropolitan Area 1985 traffic prediction 1985
   General Physical Description note: Tube 5

Grant deed map charts undated
   General Physical Description note: Tube 6

Questionable land transactions in Westlands Water District undated
   General Physical Description note: Tube 6