

Part I

Krotona Institute of Theosophy Department of Studies Krotona School of Theosophy

Public educational work was a feature of the Krotona community from its earliest days in Hollywood. The first director of education was Augustus F. Knudsen in 1912. Incorporated as Krotona Institute of Theosophy in 1913, schools for all age-levels were planned. During road building and housing/office construction, a Winter Session of fourteen weeks began January 14 and ended April 25, 1914.¹

In 1922, a proposal was made to establish a School at Adyar whose programs would attempt to develop a dynamic synthesis of all the aspects of philosophy, religion, science, literature, and art. Dr. Besant directed that the work should be based on the central principle that all human activity is an evolving expression of the One Life. The school was called Brahmavidya² Ashrama, a name meaning practically the same as 'School of the Wisdom'. It was opened in 1926 with the expectation that educated young men and women, were eager to lead a simple life. The student who aspires to Wisdom needs to cultivate the talent to engender enquiry and the capacity to discover illumination from within not from without. It was to be a nursery from which generations of theosophical communications would arise with the best qualities of mind and heart.

As the work grew at Krotona in old Hollywood, in addition to the resident theosophist, the Board drew on the university and professional teachers in the Los Angeles area for its faculty, and they continued to hold sessions up until the time of moving to Ojai, California, in 1924.

The Board of Trustees of the Krotona Institute still today rules the Krotona School, and the Kern Foundation has indicated a willingness to support a theosophical school analogous to the School of the Wisdom at Adyar. Although, the Krotona Institute has a library, today, it is no longer considered to be one of the finest special libraries in the area. The removal of rare and first editions by Lord Lytton, Romesh C. Dutt, Bulwer, and many others, whom were members of the Society, and even those within the Theosophical Society cannot offer researchers the material needed to do extensive research, and their lack of having archives available to back up their findings. They say that Krotona does not have an archives department, the author wishes to say they do have an Esoteric Archives kept in the E.S. office opposite the Krotona Library, which is

¹ Ross, Joseph E, *Krotona of Old Hollywood 1866-1913*, Volume I, El Montecito Oaks Press.

² Brahmavidya (derived from the Sanskrit words brahma and vidyā) is that branch of scriptural knowledge derived primarily through a study of the divine. Brahmavidya is the knowledge and spiritual knowledge of divine faith/God/existence/knowledge of the absolute.

not open to the public, nor to members of the Esoteric School. What is of interest is what Radha Burnier, International President of the Theosophical Society at the time, and Esoteric Head of Krotona quoted as the purpose of Krotona at a staff meeting on March 3, 1999. The statement is from notes taken by Nell C. Taylor, and Shirley Nicholson, acting as Resident Head of Krotona, revised them. The author has added the words within [...] to show the correct statements regarding Krotona's position.

When Krotona's Hollywood site ceased to be congenial, it was sold, and the monies divided between the ATS [American Theosophical Society in America. The name was changed in 1934 to the Theosophical Society in America,] and the Krotona Institute. Krotona (became) [was always] a center for the Esoteric (School), [Section, with an Esoteric School] as is The Manor in Sydney, Australia. It is said that the ES stands for the heart of the TS, and that it would vitalize the TS by its members' insight, deeper perspective, greater devotion and serious intent to live theosophy. Unselfish, pure intent combined with a living brotherhood attract forces from above, producing a radiating center.

We must not be so closed that people cannot come here, and yet visitors must not overshadow the objects of the center. The central purpose must be maintained, but the center must also be available to others. For example, the classes at Krotona School should take place in an atmosphere that itself helps develop the inner point of view. CW Leadbeater tried to bring out the importance of the inner side.

As a tree grows from sun, atmosphere, and soil, the hidden alchemy of Krotona produces sap for the tree, which in winter appears dead but in spring becomes vitalized. Influences of thought, emotion, life, in all aspects, like the sap that enlivens the whole tree, generate vitality for ES work.

The TS is to offer theosophy, making it available to those who are ready, but not watering it down and calling such things as acupuncture "theosophy." There must be a clear transformation message, or at least a seed. The ES should offer clear insights and encourage deeper levels, but the ES should not take over the TS work.

Community life is testing, as are monasteries and convents. It brings out difficulties and challenges. Part of the work is to live together and work together in a spirit of goodwill. HPB said we all have imperfections, but we are all sincere, trying to live in cooperation and brotherhood, and to see our flaws and correct them. It is a greater responsibility for the residents in a community to have right attitude and feelings.

The following documentation will start around 1932 when Alfred Taylor returned to college as a student at Oregon State College (now University) in Eugene earning his B.A. In 1934 he earned his M.A. — Alfred, somewhat bitter and disillusioned by his war experiences, for in 1916 he enlisted in the Canadian Royal Air Force Flying Corps, and in 1917 was shot down over Germany and held prisoner until November 1918. Something he never really talked about the rest of his life but found a home in academic life. At college, he accumulated a straight "A" average except a lonely "B" in swimming. He graduated with Honors and was a member of Phi Beta Kappa. Taylor was one of the first four students to receive his degree of Doctor of Philosophy in biology at Oregon State University on June 3, 1935, was appointed instructor of the Department of Zoology (Physiology) 1935-1940 with Herbert L. Jones. There, he became associated with the world-renowned chemist, Roger Williams. He was brought to the Clayton Foundation Biochemical Institute at the University of Texas by its head, Dr. Roger Williams in mid 1940 to work in cancer research, so to discover cancer's cause and ways aimed at cure of it. Together their research on Cancer brought them international

fame.³ But Alfred always had a strong interest in philosophy, (love of truth in daily life) more than in science.

Nell Moore Carmichael was a senior student at the University of Texas in 1945 and was enrolled in Dr. Roger J. Williams's class in the spring of 1945. Her major was Zoology, minor was in Chemistry, Math, and Art where she designed costumes for the Austin Ballet Society. She was also a member of the Lota Sigma Pi, Tellurium Chapter honorary chemistry fraternity for women. One day, near the end of the term of her last year before graduation, she was walking down the hall of the Chemistry Building, when Dr. Williams, who knew she would be graduating in 1945, stopped her. He asked if she would be interested in work after the term ended. She said, "yes". He then led her to his office to talk about a position that would soon be open. After a few more questions, he telephoned a scientist working at the Clayton Foundation Biochemical Institute, which researched human nutrition and pathology, made an appointment for her to be interviewed that afternoon by the scientist who was conducting research in cancer.

There, Nell met and was interviewed by Dr. Alfred Taylor. His research assistant, Adele Kynette, was leaving the position, to attend Medical School and become a physician. Dr. Taylor asked the usual questions, i.e., interested in permanent work, etc. for they prefer a stable employee, not one who will work a year or two, then move on. Nell Carmichael got the job and that began their long-lasting relationship. Nell soon realized that here was a man whose interests and experience were much wider than his chosen field of scientific investigation. For he was widely read in literature, adept in Mathematics, and Physics. Nell and Dr. Taylor were married in Austin, Texas 27th day of June 1958. Nell Moore Carmichael was born in Elgin Texas 15th day of December 1924.

Around 1964, Alfred was 68 thinking of retirement at the end of school year August 31, 1965; he planned to retire from his 25-year position as Research Scientist with the Clayton Foundation Biochemical Institute at the University of Texas in Austin, Texas. He had joined the Theosophical Society in 1952, after having studied comparative religions and philosophies for many years. Nell Carmichael joined the Theosophical Society in 1953, working with the Austin Lodge, serving in various offices. Alfred gave many lodge members' talks and public talks, as well as writing articles for *The Theosophist* and *The American Theosophist*; he was often an invited speaker at federation meetings and at the national conventions and summer schools. They looked forward to his retirement in June as an opportunity to devote full-time to theosophical work, lecturing, writing, or serving in whatever capacities their talents lay.

Nell's Cancer research led her to co-author 15 research papers and scientific drawings for Dr. Roger J. Williams' *Nutrition in a Nutshell* (1962), and *You are Extraordinary* (1967).

Dr. Henry Smith was at that time National President of the Theosophical Society in America. Early in the year Dr. Taylor was in correspondence with Dr. Smith regarding the possibility of coming to work at the Olcott Headquarters, because his speaking and teaching abilities were well-known at Olcott where he appeared on their platform on

³ See: "Effect of sodium fluoride on tumor growth", Alfred Taylor and Nell Carmichael Taylor Clayton Foundation Biochemical Institute, University of Texas, Austin.
<http://www.slweb.org/taylor-taylor.1965.html>. "The Clayton Foundation Biochemical Institute", A short history by Roger J. Williams. <http://www.cm.utexas.edu/williams/CFBI%20Short%20History.html>.

several occasions including the American Honorary Lecture in 1959.

At one of the occasions when Taylor gave a lecture at the Annual Convention programs, he met Herbert Kern, and they became good friends. Herbert had just completed his project of financing and having the Guest House at Krotona built. From personal experience, he felt that Krotona needed some simple but adequate accommodations for visitors to Krotona. He had with him a folio of photographs of the Guest House, outside and interior views, that he proudly showed to the Taylors. "You ought to go to Krotona, Al," he said, "you'd really make that place!"

On another occasion, he took the Taylors to lunch at a downtown Wheaton restaurant. Yet another time Herbert took them for dinner to a restaurant in a nearby town. Dr. Smith responded encouragingly to Alfred's offer and said that the Board of Directors would consider the application at their July meeting during the Convention. That year the Convention took place in a large tent installed over the tennis courts. Attending members were housed at the Headquarters Building or in private homes in Wheaton. Meals were served in the Headquarters basement.

For some months previous, dissatisfaction had been growing both in the Section and more particularly among the other officers and leaders of the Society concerning Dr. Smith's performance as National President. Events came to a head at the 1965 Convention and resulted in Dr. Smith's resignation as President before the sessions ended.

The situation at the national TS headquarters in Wheaton, Illinois, was at that time grave. For months there had been growing conflict between the National President, Henry Smith, and the staff. Ann Kerr, in 1965 resigned as National Secretary apparently as an effort to force some change. Henry Smith telephoned Nell Taylor to ask that she accept appointment as National Secretary. Nell telephoned Ann to find out more information, and Nell said she would not walk out on the job. Nothing more came of it. Henry divorced his wife Gene, and married Joana whom most of the staff considered had exercised an occult influence over him. So, the concern of the Board and staff was how to go about removing Smith from office.

Joy Mills, as Vice President, was appointed to fill the remainder of the term. These changes were burdensome to the Board and necessitated extra sessions to work out details of the arrangements that rippled through the entire administration. Thus, the Board's consideration of Dr. Taylor's application for work at the Headquarters was postponed further into the days ahead.

Even in the spring of 1965, Dr. Taylor had a contingency plan in case, a seemingly remote possibility, the future work did not lie at Olcott, they would settle in Carpentaria, California, a small coastal town with a good clean beach. Alfred always favored the West Coast. Their plan was to join in theosophical activity in nearby Santa Barbara and Ojai. During one of the E.S. retreats at Krotona in 1956, Betty Warrington invited the Taylors to tea to make their acquaintance with Grace Porter. She was on the Board of Krotona Institute and was also attending the 1965 Summer Sessions at Olcott. As she approached and nodded a smile to the Taylors, Grace said, "I'd like to talk to you folks some time about coming to Krotona." As the Olcott Board had not yet considered the Taylor application, he indicated he'd be glad to talk to her at a convenient time. Nell said, "What about right now?" So, they found a suitable place to talk, and Grace briefly explained the setup of the teaching work at Krotona under

Laurence Bendit, M.D., and his wife, Phoebe.

It was around December 1953, that N. Sri Ram wrote to Mrs. Elise Staggs that he was head of the E.S., He was also the head of the Krotona Board, but then, apart from the value of link which may enable him to act in certain circumstances, the post must be merely nominal. "We need at Krotona someone who will be able to make it a centre, possibly for training workers and lecturers, in which case there may be attracted to it several comparatively young and active members who would be willing to give themselves to the work, in one way or another. So, by 1959, N. Sri Ram invited Laurence Bendit, who was completing his term as general secretary of the Theosophical Society in England, to come to Krotona, with his wife to initiate the school. The Bendit's had Sunday lectures in the Krotona Hall. Following then three Mondays in a row, they would have discussions on that lecture where everybody in the audience could ask about it and make comments. That was the beginning of the school. The venue was often in Krotona residents' homes including the studio built by Audie Tuttle #18. They came to Krotona for their retirement and wanted to start the Department of Studies as an educational program of the Krotona Institute presenting theosophical teachings and to demonstrate their relation to the vital problems of life. Grace said that the Bendit's were leaving soon to return to England but were expected to remain at Krotona for their term. However, differences arose between them and the residents against their idea of a school at Krotona. They did not want new people coming into Krotona. Grace thought that Alfred would be the ideal person to head the studies at Krotona, and that an apartment for them would be vacant in September. Alfred said he would like that very much. So, Grace telephoned Herbert Staggs to send an application form right away. In a few days the Taylors' fate was sealed.

Around 1960 Grace Porter was chairman of a discussion group at the West Coast Conference of about ten, (Bim (Wilma) Lecklider was one of the attendees') and Grace asked the group "Since you people are theosophists from all over the state of California, what do you think of the idea of getting the Krotona School of Theosophy started?" The whole group got fired up about the idea of a school asking Grace many questions, and Grace said, "Well, it will happen, and we'll get it going."

According to Hazel C. Gruber, Secretary and the members of the Krotona Board, Lawrence and Phoebe Bendit had made derogatory remarks about Charles W. Leadbeater, Annie Besant and some also about Geoffrey Hodson. The board also felt the Bendit's were trying to "muscle in" and take over Krotona so non-ES members could live there, which caused much upheaval among the board members. When the Bendit's moved to Krotona, after building their home #46, a lease was drawn up between them and George Hall who represented Krotona and stated that the Bendit's could resign from the E.S. and even the T.S. and still live in the home that they had built at Krotona for the rest of their lives. N. Sri Ram, being the President of the Board of Krotona, and Outer Head of the Esoteric Section, made the statement:

"I myself feel that it would be difficult to maintain Krotona as a purely E.S. community without attracting too much attention from members who are not in the E.S. and creating an impression of exclusiveness and perhaps snobbery. The E.S. should really function in privacy, and you cannot have privacy with a large estate more or less openly dedicated to the E.S. work. So, it might be a good idea to consider developing Krotona as a Theosophical Center, with the E.S. activity included in it as a strong but silent current. The E.S. work will not suffer by such a development. It will proceed more or less unnoticed by others who are not especially interested in that kind of life and work. But of course, we might have rules for the Krotona community, which would be somewhat on E.S. lines — no meat eating, etc. This is just my idea which I am expressing to you, but it has really to be considered by all concerned, yourselves, Mrs. Boughton and others."

It was at this time they opened residence on Krotona Hill to all T.S. members. N. Sri Ram reported that changes are not to be deplored but may even be necessary and desirable, but some of the board members were looking back a few years and recalled how the Happy Valley School in Ojai was lost to anti-theosophists, and the Liberal Catholic Pro-Cathedral in Hollywood was lost due to the split among the Bishops. Grace Boughton saw it necessary to re-consider the Resolution passed July 9th, 1960, in which Krotona was to be designated as a Theosophical Community. By August 13th, 1960, a letter sent to Sam Wylie from N. Sri Ram said:

"So far as the activities at Krotona are concerned, it is the Krotona Board which should decide what activities are to take place there, not the National Board at Olcott."

It was thought that Krotona tried to take away workers from Olcott. Grace assured them that they never invited any Olcott worker to come to Krotona. They beg for a placement; doubtless warmer climate and separate housing supplies a reason for their desire to come to Krotona.

By May 1961, N. Sri Ram writes to the residents in Krotona and members of the E.S.T. in Ojai:

Dear Sisters and Brothers:

I understand through some letters I have received that there is some confusion and uncertainty in the minds of some connected with Krotona as to what exactly is the nature of the changes that have been made and whether it would not have been advisable to consult those who are living or working at Krotona as to these changes.

The Changes Fall Under Two Heads:

- (1) The reorganization of the machinery of the E.S. in the United States.
- (2) The activities at Krotona.

As regards (2), the question of organizing a program of lectures and study-classes at Krotona was discussed by me with all the principal workers and residents at Krotona in May 1961, as you may remember.

It was taken up again this year when I was there with Mrs. Grace Boughton and other members of the Board, including Mr. Sam Wylie, who was present at Krotona during my visit.

The Board formally sanctioned such a program, and it was decided to entrust Dr. Laurence Bendit with the chief responsibility for that part of the

work. The Krotona Institute was started with various aims and objects specified in its constitution and the constitution and the work that has been started now is in full accordance with those aims and objects.

As the program of Theosophical lectures and classes at Krotona was thought of about two years ago and discussed then, it seemed unnecessary to discuss it again this year except with the Board.

As for (1), namely the reorganization of the E.S., into five Divisions covering different parts of the U.S.A., in the place of one E.S.T. Division embracing the whole country, I have given to Mrs. Grace Boughton a communication dated August 1st, explaining the reasons for this step and its desirability, and asked her to have it printed or multigraphed and sent to *each* member of the E.S.T. in the U.S.A. You will have received it by this time. I need not repeat here what I have said there.

The Corresponding Secretary for each of the five Divisions (East, South, South-West, North-West and Central) will be *fully* responsible for the work in his or her Division and will be directly in correspondence with Adyar (or me as the O.H.) but for formal purposes (statistics, distribution of papers and keeping the funds) they will be in touch with the E.S. office at Krotona.

As the program of Theosophical lectures and classes at Krotona was thought of about two years ago and discussed then, it seemed unnecessary to discuss it again this year except with the Board.

It should not be thought by anyone that there was any other motive or reason for these changes besides what I have explicitly stated in the communication sent to all members of the E.S.T. in the U.S.A. and this communication.

With Cordial Greetings,
N. Sri Ram, Outer Head

In the place of one E.S.T. Division embracing the whole country, reorganization will be covered in the history of Krotona Vol. VII.

Therefore, it was resolved that any member of the Theosophical Society may apply for the privilege of building a home on the Krotona property in Ojai subject to the requirements and approval of the Krotona Board. At the death or upon severing connection with the Krotona community, the home becomes the property of the Krotona Institute. It was reported that Samuel Wylie was authorized to inform the Board of Trustees at Headquarters at Wheaton that the members of the T.S. who may be interested in building homes at Krotona, under leases as now in force for the E.S. members, should apply to the Secretary of the Krotona Board of Trustees'.

The Trust Agreement executed on July 6, 1961, between Herbert A. Kern and John C. Kern can be read in the Ross Collection.

Jumping to June 5, 1963, for a special meeting of Trustees with N. Sri Ram, and Dr. Bendit, discusses the present and future of Krotona as a kind of University. N. Sri Ram proposed to call Krotona a Theosophical Center, not an E.S. Center so not to be exclusive. Out of many discussions regarding the status of Krotona, the Board appoints Dr. Laurence Bendit to revive its educational function, and to select a committee to implement and organize as Director of Studies a program of work for members of the Society and the Public in collaboration with the Vice-President of the Board, Mrs. Boughton.

Reading *the Ojai* for April 5, 1964, it carried a banner headline "Sea of Trailers at Ojai Entrance". George Hall negotiated sale of "flat land along the highway to lessen the

strain of greatly increased taxes. George kept all details secret excepting to tell the Board that this was a high class 'retirement center', and this would be a beautiful addition to Krotona. When Hazel Gruber confronted George Hall at his home, asking to see the contract, he refused. Hazel told him she had a right to see it, and it picked up a folder and handed her the papers. It was not a contract at all, but simply what is called a 'California Real Estate Deposit Receipt'. She was still ignorant of the terms of the contract. She reminded George that there was no need to rush into selling any Krotona land. They had a very substantive cash reserve, and the land is going up in value all the time.

September 28, 1964, N. Sri Ram writes to Herbert Staggs answering his letter of July 7th. Asking Herbert in the Certificate of Amendment of Articles of Incorporation of Krotona Institute of Theosophy to insert at the proper places:

(1). To provide a site for the work of the Esoteric School of Theosophy, with the necessary facilities.

(2). Without prejudice to the activities of the Esoteric School, to foster and promote Theosophical studies and discussions.

The clause mentioning schools, colleges, etc., may be altered as follows:

(3). To found, organize, establish, maintain, and conduct any school, college, or seminar on a Theosophical basis.

The above-proposed Amendments were accepted on February 5, 1965.

The Bendit's received a letter from Hazel that she was letting Edith Gray have their house. They were taken back. They had no idea of giving up just yet, although family matters have cropped up unexpectedly for the Bendit family. They did not have to go immediately, and they would certainly be ready by the end of the year. Dr. Bendit was concerned regarding an understudy to take his place in the department of studies. That was to be Edith Schlosser for a very short term. It should not be difficult to find somebody to take over the department, especially now that the Bendit's have got things going, and assuming that the Krotona residents do not choke the work altogether as they were causing so many blocks for the Bendit's as it was. The Krotona residence did not like to hear derogatory remarks against C.W.L. Dr. Besant, and unkind thoughts against Geoffrey Hodson. They did not like the idea that Krotona would be open to non-E.S. members for residence, which practically they thought would end catastrophically, as it did before when it was tried in Hollywood. The fear that Dr. Laurence would take over Krotona, even if Laurence would resign from the E.S. and even the T.S. he could still live in his home the rest of his life, and that there was nothing that Krotona could do about it. They wanted to leave Krotona and return to England, but that meant losing their investment in the house they had built at Krotona. Meanwhile, Edith Gray, a long-time worker for the T.S. at Olcott, was placing T.S. books in public libraries, had retired and wanted to live at Krotona. She was currently living in one of the Guest House units early in 1965 as the only vacancy at Krotona. When she learned about the plight of the Bendit's, she bought their house, thereby giving them back a large part of their investment and enabling them to return to England. Edith then moved into her own newly purchased home at Krotona.

March 13, the Northern and Southern California Young Theosophist Leagues met at the Krotona Institute, Ojai, under the auspices of Dr. Laurence, Director of Studies, for a series of discussions to present the young people's views of the Society. Participating were about 254 young people between the ages of 18 and 39.

Rebellion was the keyword. Some suggested that the Society isn't built to handle young people; that it needs more activities slanted toward them. Another suggestion, that Theosophy needs to be expressed in more modern terms. Others suggested that the structure of the Society is too tight, limiting freedom of thought.

It closed with a special invitation by Mrs. Anita Wild for dinner at her home. To say the least, a herd of young people in any house on the hill was quite a novelty. At the evening get-together in the music room was a magic show and a hootenanny. David Hamaker, Dr. John Hamaker's son, pulled out his guitar and ran the whole show.

The Taylors left Austin on August 12, 1965, with their 1963 Dodge Dart loaded with all their worldly goods, having sold or given away most household and superfluous personal items. On the 19th, they arrived at Ojai, late morning. Parking their car near the E.S. building, they took a few steps down the walk, but stopped, thinking the office would more likely be in the library complex. Starting back toward the library, but in a moment, Harold Kirk came bounding up from the E.S. building. He knew from Grace that they were expected, and he had seen them from a window. Vera Boardman went to the library telephone; at that time the E.S. building had no telephone and at times when the library was closed, the telephone was placed on the sill of an open window to be available from the outside. Vera came back to tell the Taylors they were to stay in Elsie Walter's house until their space would be vacant on September 1, as Sallie and Edward Northam would be moving to a rented house in Ojai. Also, the Taylors were to have lunch at Grace Porter's house momentarily.

When they arrived at Grace's house, they found Rukmini Devi Arundale as she was staying with Catharine Mayes, and Gerrit Munnik as lunch guests. They really wanted to stay at the Guest House until their house was available, as Herbert Kern who donated the Guest House always wanted Alfred to utilize it. But Grace said it was previously arranged with Elsie, who was away visiting in her home state of Texas, for them to use her house. They learned, though, that Gene Smith was staying there while waiting for her house, across the road from the Braille Institute, to be finished painting and readying for her. Gene was working that day at Braille and wouldn't be home until around 5 pm. before they would be able to descend upon Elsie's house.

Grace suggested they might, while waiting, like to talk to Douglas Wild, who was a temporary Director of Studies until Edith Schlosser was to arrive from the Bay area to assume the position. Edith lived in San Jose, a dear friend of Douglas and Anita Wild, and Douglas was to assist her in the planning the studies. So, after lunch they called upon Dr. Wild and his wife Anita. Dr. Wild knew Edith from their previous residence at the same institution and was instrumental in getting her invited to the position. Edith lasted a short time when Krotona found out that she had formally been a member of the Rosicrucian's. Alfred and Douglas talked about what was being planned for the coming year and what the Taylors could do to help.

Those living at Krotona were: Grace Boughton, Corresponding Secretary of the Esoteric School and Vice President of the Krotona Institute of Theosophy, (Mr. N. Sri Ram was the Outer Head of the E.S. and was also President of the Krotona Institute);

Vernon Hill, head Gardener; Florence Hurd, head Librarian; Bonnie Ledahl; Herbert and Elise Staggs; Martin and Esther Burckes; Catharine Mayes and Betty Warrington; Elsie Walter, Grace Porter; Dr. Hector Bejarano; Dr. Douglas and Anita Wild; Eva Minnik; Sarah Mayes; Audye Tuttle; Ruth Doak; Robert and Sarah Jordan; Ernestine Barra; Rose Cederberg; Calista Lewin; Cecil Boman; Matt and Vera Boardman; Edith Gray, just retired from many years as head of the Theosophical Book Gift Institute. Harold and Neeltje Kirk; Gene Smith, Warden of the Krotona E.S. Group; Goldie Kabots; Douglas Minor; Olive Brod; George Hall; Roy and Flavia Snyder. Ethel Brown, a stout Irish lady, though she did not live at Krotona, was practically a full-time worker there. She was Catharine Mayes' cook, and she also did housecleaning for the Kern Guest House and for various residents.

The Taylors moved into their duplex apartment, No. 36, on September 7th, the other space, No. 34, occupied by Calista Lewin. Margot Blasidell Banks had arrived in the area only a little earlier than the Taylors and was staying at a house in Bates Ranch on the Rincon. She moved to Krotona into one of two newly remodeled apartments at the bottom of the hill across from the Braille Institute. About the same time Gerrit Munnik moved into the adjoining apartment.

By October, when the lodge and public work began their yearly programs, Esther Burckes invited them to join her healing group that met every Thursday evening. Henry Dawn, then head of the Mystic Star, asked them to take part in that ceremony. Alfred had in Texas taken deacon's orders in the Liberal Catholic Church and was promptly utilized at the altar of Our Lady and All Angels, located at 1502 east Ojai Avenue.

Edith Schlosser arrived in Ojai and moved into the Mary Gray house Casa de Paz, on McAndrew Road, (entrance at Houghton School) since only members of the Esoteric School were permitted to reside at Krotona. Will Ross, an excellent lecturer, and his wife, Zoia, had an apartment on Besant Road near Allan Hooker's Ranch House restaurant. Edith, Douglas, Will, Warren Blakely, (a photographer, who had a shop in the village), Alfred and Nell were present at a planning meeting at Will's apartment to discuss the Department of Studies activities. And so, the fall classes went ahead as planned. There seems to be no record of the programs of those early days during that first term of October to December.

By late December, Grace Porter and Herbert Staggs felt that Alfred was the proper person to be Director of Studies. The Board decided to appoint Dr. Alfred Taylor as Director of Studies in place of Edith Schlosser for the Calendar year of 1966. The Board secretary, Hazel Gruber, wrote Edith a letter informing her of their decision effective January 1, 1966. Edith had been away for the holidays, and before looking at her mail, called for a meeting. This became an awkward situation, as Edith had been appointed only to fill out the remainder of Dr. Bendit's term as Director, which she did. Grace Porter justified the Board's action. When Will Ross and Warren Blakely heard that Edith had not been reappointed, each one telephoned Alfred and curtly resigned from their speaking engagements at Krotona and from all further involvement with the Department of Studies. Edith did call and apologized for calling a meeting as she now realized it was not her position to call a meeting but Alfred's. A few days later, Douglas, Anita, Edith, Alfred, and Nell met in the Music Room to try to assuage the wounds, but Edith was still pouting and belligerent at the "covert" activities at Krotona, and Douglas Wild also was resentful. Such was the "happy" atmosphere under which Dr. Taylor

began his leadership of the educational side of Krotona.

Meanwhile Joy Mills, National President, invited Edith to be the Head of the Dept. of Education at Olcott, so she packed her suitcases and went back to Olcott.

For a few months, programs continued to be billed under the heading Krotona Institute of Theosophy, Department of Studies. Krotona Hall was utilized for major lectures, and discussion groups were held in the Music Room or in one or more of the residents' homes. But Dr. Taylor thought the educational efforts needed a new name that would reflect traditional scholastic standards.

Dr. Taylor, Director of Studies, wrote a report and recommendation to the Krotona Board of Trustees regarding the establishment of a Krotona School of Theosophy.

The trustees of the Kern Foundation in accordance with the advice of Mr. John Kern then assumed the position that funds would be granted to the Krotona Institute only for the support of a School of Theosophy. See the Trust Agreement.

At about the same time, Herbert Kern's estate, i.e., the Herbert A. Kern Foundation, from which money was given to Krotona for educational purposes, was about to begin controlled distribution over time. Certain requirements must be fulfilled before funds could be released from the Kern Foundation. Krotona had not received any monies, and Alfred felt that these requirements could best be met by establishing a more bonafide teaching arrangement than the heretofore-scattered lectures and discussion groups. He envisioned an educational body organized on the lines of a college or university, and that it could be called Krotona School of Theosophy. It would be around January 1972 that we hear Krotona School would be accredited as a university qualified to give degrees in subjects like philosophy, comparative religion, etc.

Some Krotona board members, while wanting to do whatever necessary to obtain Kern Foundation funds, nevertheless opposed the college idea on grounds that it would bring a lot of non-ES people onto the Krotona estate. Alfred insisted that many theosophists would welcome such a school, and further that it would produce many theosophists. Herbert Staggs, while very appreciative of Alfred's theosophical knowledge and talents as a teacher, wanted Alfred to compose a prospectus and travel up and down the West Coast, visiting the lodges, to find out if there were enough interest and support to have such a school. Alfred did write a brief prospectus, and only Grace Porter supported his plea while the school idea fell on deaf ears with the rest of the Board.

Alfred envisioned a Krotona School that would give courses not only in basic and advanced theosophical subjects, but that nearly all contents of a modern university's curriculum could, in time, be taught and correlated with the teachings of the Ancient Wisdom. From this viewpoint he sought to imbue members of the Krotona board and others with the idea that Krotona could grow into a real center of learning based on a firm ground of theosophical understanding.

Somehow, over the weeks and months of 1966-67, the Krotona School idea came to be accepted. Meanwhile, Edith Gray died on September 23, 1965, and her house would be vacant as soon as the estate was settled, including having a sale of her furniture and household items. Who was Edith Gray? Edith Gray joined the Theosophical Society and Akgar Lodge in Chicago in 1912. In 1946, the President of the American Section L.W. Rogers, along with Henry D. Olsen and Eugene J. Wix,

formed the Theosophical Book Gift Institute. Just two years later Edith decided she could help this worthwhile project. Edith was named president of TBGI (The Theosophical Book Gift Institute) in 1954, an office she held until her passing in 1965.

John Stienstra's requests to the Krotona Board that he be allowed to buy the house built by the Bendit's, but it was agreed that this would be an entirely different matter than the transfer of the Bendit life interest to Edith Gray. Because of the circumstances, and Miss Gray's age, this transfer was agreed to. Now there is no life interest to be considered, and to create one would be to establish a precedent that might endanger the welfare of Krotona. It was resolved that no interest of any kind may be sold in any building at Krotona.

John Stienstra was informed that the Board would give favorable consideration to his application for residence at Krotona under the usual conditions should he care to make such application. Krotona thought that the Stienstra's would make a nice addition to Krotona if they were really interested in helping with the work there. However, they might be roaming about, either to Olcott or Adyar, or possibly Kalakshetra, making their tenancy brief, and so it was decided to have them on a rental basis. For a few months, it was rented to Mr. & Mrs. Jacobson and their teen-age daughter. The family came from Missouri to work with Ruth Wilson in establishing Taormina, a theosophical retirement community at the base of the Krotona Estate. They moved out in late 1966.

It was suggested that Alfred and Nell might want to move into that house, as their apartment was so tiny. But Alfred wanted the Edith Gray house for the school. However, it was rented temporarily to an attorney (with wife and teen daughter) who was involved with getting the Taormina retirement community started. After the usual deliberations, the board finally approved the house for classrooms. As Edith Gray had bought the house from the Bendit's, thereby enabling them to recoup their investment in the house and return to England, the Krotona rules stated that anyone who builds a house at Krotona at their own expense, cannot pass the property on to heirs, but that the property reverts to the Krotona Institute. So that it was Edith Gray's gift of the house to Krotona, and therefore it was appropriate to call the building the Edith Gray House.

The Kern Foundation had given tentative approval justifying foundation support of a School of Theosophy. Yet, Dr. Taylor and Grace Porter had to make a visit to Chicago during the Second week of January to meet with the officers of the Northern Trust Company, and Mr. Madigan for further negotiations. Statements drawn up by Dr. Taylor, setting forth the ideas in writing for the Trust Company explaining the function and plans of the Krotona Department of Studies. Grace and Alfred had also to meet with the National Board of the Theosophical Society at Olcott to confer with the members regarding cooperation between the Society and the Krotona Department of Studies.

Meanwhile, Mr. Madigan had to visit Krotona and meet with Krotona Board members, and finally the green light was given to go ahead with the plans for a school. Resolution was passed that a School is hereby established as an integral part of the Krotona Institute of Theosophy. Replacing the "Department of Studies of the Krotona Institute". The name of the school shall be "The Krotona School of Theosophy".

Gerrit Munnik, with his experience as a professional interior decorator, and Grace Porter went to work having the living room, that would be the main classroom, re-carpeted. They purchased new drapes, comfortable folding chairs, office furniture, typewriters, tape recorder and slide projector and screen. Grace, with an eye for

appearances, purchased china teacups, and saucers, and a coffee maker. Gerrit had small folding tables made, like TV tables, and painted them himself. Soon all was ready for use. Harold Kirk, at the Krotona Press printed announcement brochures.

Dr. Taylor published a preliminary prospectus for a Krotona School of Theosophy.

At the time of the establishment of the present Krotona Institute of Theosophy in Ojai, in 1924, Dr. Annie Besant, under whose auspices and guidance Krotona was founded, announced plans for a School of Theosophy to be established here, with the chief purpose of training workers for more useful and fruitful work in the Theosophical Society. This plan has never come to fruition.

Such a school is now under consideration by the Board of Trustees of Krotona Institute, and the Kern Foundation has indicated a willingness to support a school analogous to the school of the Wisdom at Adyar. This prospectus has been prepared to present our tentative plans for such a school, proposed to be designated as the Krotona School of Theosophy, with the object of determining the interest among members and whether or not sufficient students would be forthcoming to make such a school worthwhile.

Its main objective would be to help students attain to a high level of understanding of theosophical teachings together with their applications to man and nature. In addition, there would be emphasis on the training of theosophists for lodge and fieldwork.

It is planned that there would be three terms of about 10 weeks each, annually. Day students would meet from 9 a.m. to 12 for study and instruction, with the afternoons devoted to individual studies, seminars, reports, and conferences with faculty members. Evening classes would be scheduled from 7 to 9 p.m.

Each student enrolled in the school would be free to attend all or some of the classes being conducted. The emphasis would be on independent work and thought, but with opportunities for informal talks between student and instructor. There would also be regular group discussions on various aspects of the work. Students qualified to do so would have the privilege of giving public talks or serving as chairmen of discussion groups. Encouragement would be given to individuals capable of pursuing special studies in occult fields, and reports of such work would be mimeographed for distribution to interested theosophists here and elsewhere. Also, other worthwhile special papers would be made available in the same way.

The faculty for the proposed school would be recruited from qualified individuals in the local area, and it is hoped that funds would be available for bringing in, for a term or more, outstanding theosophists from other areas in this country and from abroad. Mr. Geoffrey Hodson has expressed a willingness to teach in such a school when his American tour is completed next spring.

A detailed curriculum for such a theosophical educational center is not practical at this time. Courses would be available for elementary and advanced studies in Theosophy. There would also be classes in written and oral communication of theosophical knowledge, including public speaking and the preparation of lectures, the writing and presentation of publicity material, articles, reviews, etc. Approaches to Theosophy through religion, science, philosophy, and art would receive attention together with the applications of theosophical principles to the affairs of mankind.

The Krotona Institute with its fine library is an ideal location for a School of Theosophy. It is situated in an area that contains a greater population of theosophists than anywhere else in the United States. Further, the number of Society members in

the Ojai Valley will soon be augmented with the establishment of the Taormina project for retired theosophists. In addition, there are many theosophists in Los Angeles and other nearby cities. Such a concentration of theosophists should ensure an enrollment sufficient to justify the school. It is hoped to attract members of the Society from other states, Canada and Mexico who might be able to attend such a school.

Plans for the school are now in a formative stage, and it is important that we have some idea of the number of members who would be interested in enrolling in such a school. Those interested and who would like to have further announcements of definite dates, proposed courses, enrollment fees etc., may write to the Director of Studies at the following address. This will not constitute an enrollment or infer any obligation whatsoever.

The first session of the Krotona School opened for a ten-week term on March 13, 1967, introducing the school curriculum for the Fall Term held at the Krotona Amphitheater located just west of the library met with enthusiastic response, with a resident faculty of three: Gerrit Munnik, Frederick Werth and Alfred Taylor, all with Doctor degrees (Ph.D.), and these three continued throughout the duration of the school under Alfred, until June 1972. Margot Banks oversaw publicity, including monthly notices in *The American Theosophist*. Nell Taylor was secretary and bookkeeper. Continuing Discussion Groups, with no registration or fee were headed by Alfred on Saturday afternoons in the Music Room, by Audye Tuttle on a weekday evening at her home, and jointly by Margot Banks and Nell Taylor on a weekday evening at Margot's home.

A four-week summer session was held the first year to keep the momentum going. In the following years, fall, winter and spring terms were held. The Continuing Discussion Groups were reduced to only the Saturday afternoon group in the Music Room. Before the terms began, a Sunday afternoon program was held to introduce the teachers for the new term, both resident and guest teachers. Each one spoke a few words about the course they were to teach. Grace Porter always had an elaborate tea and coffee table at these programs. A long table was covered with a lace tablecloth were the silver tea and coffee services, china cups, cookies and flowers were displayed. Several ladies helped with the pouring.

Catharine Mayes was a most enthusiastic supporter of the school. She was considered the spiritual queen mother of Krotona, since she stays out of controversial matters and strives to maintain a spirit of unity. In particular, she liked Alfred's class on *The Secret Doctrine*, though she attended all the others that she could. When Alfred proposed inviting Geoffrey Hodson to come from New Zealand as a guest teacher, she was concerned that since he was no longer young and had previously had a severe illness, he might become ill at Krotona, and she would feel obligated to look after him financially. Catharine Mayes always financially helped when speakers or leaders would visit Krotona. Somehow, Alfred convinced her that it would be all right and she need not worry, and as it turned out, no problem arose with Geoffrey's health.

Dr. Taylor explained that the school had made an inquiry for veteran approval on June 11, 1971, and that on July 1, 1971, Mr. Earl RT. Cumpiano, Field Representative Bureau of School Approvals, State of California, Department of Education, came to the school to discuss the question. A letter outlined the necessary steps which can be taken immediately to qualify for the privilege of granting degrees under California law, Education Code, Section 29007 (A) (3). Dr. Taylor stated that the Application Forms

were in the process of being completed.

The Academic Committee then determined that the Krotona School of Theosophy should grant a Bachelor of Arts degree with the completion of two hundred hours of course work, a thesis, and an oral examination. Discussion followed that maybe one hundred and eighty credit hours would be required.

It was at this time that the Committee discussed the advisability of changing the name of the school too Krotona University. It was decided that no change would be considered.

Geoffrey Hodson, with his reputation as a clairvoyant, drew the largest attendance of all the guest teachers, and his courses were held in the Krotona Hall. Marjorie Dawn, Edith Englander, and Sylvia Chase kept registration, and accurate roll checks.

The resident faculty were Alfred Taylor, Gerrit Munnik, and Fred Werth, with various guest teachers that enhanced the curriculum as listed: Dragi Milor, Pieter K. Roest, James S. Perkins, Donald Chase, Dr. Charles Muses, Dr. Douglas Wild, John Douglas Low, Framrose Bode, Carle Christensen, Dr. Jose Acuna, Joyce Beavis, Oliver Greene, Gordon Clough, Balak R. Mullik, Joy Mills, Geoffrey Barborka, and Dr. Michel d'Obrenovic.

Morning classes were from 10am to noon, evening classes from 7 to 9pm with a midway break fro refreshments.

We should mention Bim Lecklider and her mother, Mary, moved to Ojai from Fresno to help with the Krotona School. Those who could not find a ride to attend the Krotona School, Marjorie Dawn and Kathryn Schreiber volunteered to use their cars to shuttle the students back and forth from the school to town. They were sort of getting to the stage that they did not want to do it anymore. Dr. Taylor wondered if Bim would be interested in helping with refreshments and transportation along with Helen Yaroch in her 1954 Chevrolet station wagon. They paid her at first \$2.00 for each trip.

Alfred realized the advantage to be had, in many ways, if the school could become accredited. They had a good many academically qualified teachers. Along about 1970, Alfred proceeded to obtain information as to the requirements for accreditation under California law. At the same time, he realized that teachers with spiritual qualities were also needed whether they had academic standing.

N. Sri Ram wrote to Dr. Taylor, that he approved the conversion of the Krotona School into a Krotona University with courses in various sub-divisions of Philosophy, Art, and Religion, which may prove to be a development with far-reaching results. He reminded Dr. Taylor that C.W. Leadbeater in his vision of the future says that the Theosophical Society has developed into a great central University for the promotion of studies along the lines of the second and third objects of the Society. N. Sri Ram reminds Dr. Taylor that he will need of course, the right kind of people to direct the courses of study. Wishing him great success in this enterprise. Alfred wanted to invite Hodson again, this time for three terms, Fall 1971, Winter and Spring 1972. Catharine Mayes was even more perturbed by the idea than she was in 1967, again fearing that he might become ill. Catharine was sort of a mother to all residents and guests at Krotona. Her noon meal table regularly hosted four, five or ten guests at a time. So, Geoffrey and Sandra came again for three terms.

At this point, another contact needed to be made with the trustees of the Kern

Foundation. Grace Porter and Herbert Staggs felt it highly desirable that Alfred should present Krotona's bid for more support from the Foundation.

During the first four years of the School, Alfred's *Secret Doctrine* class continued to grow in such popularity, especially with young people, that Vera Bressler purchased cushions to ease sitting on the floor. Bim (Wilma) Lecklider, Stephen, and Edith (Boots) Englander, Gerald (Mark) Wenner, Joseph Ross, Dennis Higgins, Charles Dietzel, Juliet Rowe, Ken Stowell, Diana Van Duym, John Henly, Kerry Johnson, to name just a few were so eager and enthusiastic in their desire for theosophy and occultism that Alfred decided to hold some special Friday evening discussion with these select few. Questions of any kind could be brought up, and Alfred was able to point out the theosophical principles involved in the problems that arose. During Taylor's *Secret Doctrine* classes, he would mention Albert Einstein connection with the enthusiasm Einstein had for the *Secret Doctrine*, referred to as his "bedtime reading".

Geoffrey Hodson's classes also attracted many young people. Among them was a family, Tatiana Adair, her younger sister, Belita, and their mother. Tatiana and all were theatrical in appearance, dressed in spectacular attire and wearing impeccable blonde wigs. Belita was in her early teens, wore "little girl" frocks and had long golden hair often arranged in curls. Some of the young people and the Adair family became interested in the Liberal Catholic Church. Belita became the organist, playing inspirational music that she claimed was channeled from the angelic world. Because she was a channel, what may be called a medium for the angelic beings, this caused a great deal of upheaval within the Krotona Board members, and the leaders of the Liberal Catholic Church. The Adair family was asked to leave soon after, as she was believed to be possessed by darkness. The family had the opportunity to meet and talk with J. Krishnamurti on the 13th of December 1975 regarding Belita's connection with the angelic beings. Mention must be made that two of the resident staff, Fred Werth and Gerrit Munnik, were Liberal Catholic Priests, and Alfred Taylor was a Deacon. Gerrit later became a Bishop.

Joy Mills writes to the National Board of Directors that when she was visiting Krotona with John Kern and Paul Williams for discussions with Dr. Alfred Taylor, the idea of publishing a general information brochure about Krotona was discussed. Joy suggested that such a brochure might be sent to every member of the section in some mailing that would go out from Olcott. Nell Taylor, who was the secretary of the Krotona School of Theosophy, said that the school was planning to issue a quarterly magazine, which will carry articles about Theosophy, as well as news of the activities of the school. The proposed title of the magazine was to be *The Arena*, based on a line in a letter from one of the Adepts: "It is time that Theosophy should enter the arena..." Joy felt that it would be useful, and the National Board should support their effort and activities. Nothing came about for the publication.

For several years the Krotona School grew in attendance, and knowledgeable guest faculty were obtained. But something was bothering the Kern Foundation about the reports that Alfred sent them. There was no record regarding the public transportation that was available from downtown Ojai to Krotona, Bim Lecklider was subsidized \$200 a month from Foundation funds to provide bus service to those in the village without cars. When there were too many for her to handle, she obtained the services of two local students to drive their cars. Joseph Ross was one of them. She was reimbursed an extra amount for the additional drivers. Three members of the

Executive Committee, Grayson Rogers, Vera Bressler, and Hazel Gruber question the amount, causing the Kern Foundation to question what looked like overpayment to Bim for transportation. Perhaps Alfred's reports did not indicate that her payments represented the service of three drivers. Bim was called on the carpet to be told that they decided it was too much money to run the school bus for this term, which was starting in two days. Bim was really upset, they told her they can't afford to do it.

Bim went to talk to Catharine Mayes and told her that it is a sad thing to stop the bus service because there were people in town depending on their getting to the classes this term. Catharine told her that she was going to keep the bus going this term because she is going to pay her the same amount that Krotona paid her to drive the bus, and she would take it out of the gardening fund that she had been giving to Krotona, \$200 a month. Dr. Taylor was not informed of this action taken by the Executive Committee, which overrode the Board. He was surprised that they had done such a thing, but then he was delighted that Catharine had jumped in on it and decided to help in this way.

Catharine actually paid for the winter and spring terms, and the Krotona garden fund never did get the money back.

There was an evident rapport between several the young people and Dr. Alfred Taylor, in that they felt they could go to him for advice or explanation of personal problems that came up. As a result, one of the young men unfortunately started a rumor that Alfred was a "Master" in the sense of the Indian Mahatmas. That was the beginning of the havoc that followed. So, Krotona resolved that no theosophical or occult study or discussion groups be held at the homes of Krotona residents without prior approval of the Board of Trustees, which approval could be cancelled at any time.

N. Sri Ram writes to Geoffrey Hodson in 1972 at Krotona, that his relationship with Alfred Taylor has been quite friendly, although he did not know him very well except through his writings and an occasional E.S. letter from him. Without expressing any judgment at all his alleged part in relation to the various young people who have figured in these recent incidents, he felt that since he has become a somewhat controversial figure, with or without any real grounds for it, it would be better when his term ends to have another person as Director. Vera Bressler and Anita Wild acted to the Board of Trustees.

A meeting was held in Geoffrey Hodson's room in the Guest House, to which all the Krotona Board members were invited, to discuss what should be done to counteract the threat to Krotona of having a bogus "Master" on the Krotona School faculty and as head. The only board member who did not attend was Gene Smith. They discussed how to get rid of Taylor and this heinous crime, and whom might they get immediately to take his place at the school.

Hazel Gruber wrote immediately to N. Sri Ram that Krotona was heading for troubled times. Bringing in all sorts of "outside" people has got out of hand and has damaged Krotona as an esoteric center. She stressed that no doubt the atmosphere of the place has changed since these new people were more interested in the Alice Bailey teachings or the Rosicrucian's. Could he please give his counsel on these matters?

N. Sri Ram responded that he can well understand the objection to the control of the funds which are given being vested solely in one person, Dr. Taylor, and his lack for proper accounting of how the funds have been expended. The funds are to be

channeled through the T.S. in America and the Krotona Institute. This meaning the Krotona Board would be responsible for the accounting and the use of the funds. He reminded Hazel not to be swayed too much by the idea that we want young people in for the work. It should be the right type of young person with whom any responsibility can be shared in a measure. He was sorry to learn that the atmosphere of Krotona has changed. He was not in favor of the Alice Bailey teachings, or the Rosicrucian's. He has found that the people who belong to these organizations are usually fanatical and much too credulous.

What kind of "tinderbox" of emotions had accumulated among Krotona Board members or residents for that "spark" of misconception to ignite such an inferno? As soon as Alfred heard of this meeting in the Hodsons' room, he wrote his letter of resignation as of June 30, 1972, to the Board and included the fact that Nell Taylor resigned as well.

Meanwhile, Arleen Heintz writes to N. Sri Ram as well, that Alfred Taylor has resigned as Director of the Krotona School, and the group "young people" around him has dissipated and their meetings have been discontinued.

The "Extension Work" of the Krotona School carried on in other towns has been discontinued as well. One reason is that this was interfering in certain ways with the Expansion Work of the T.S. for the information they used was vague, unfamiliar, and did not coincide with what most of the Krotona Board felt were the basic teachings of Theosophy as understood by the T.S.

The Kern Foundation altered their method of funding the Krotona School, putting the responsibility on the Krotona Board and limiting scholarships and working fees. Because this cut out much of the income going to the "young people" such as Bim, Joseph Ross, and Marc Wenner, these two moved off Krotona Hill; yes, another sore spot was removed. Catharine Mayes received a letter from the Krotona Board that Marc nor Joseph could stay as a guest with her even for two weeks. If that was difficult for her to understand, the Board would take some further action. For a while the Board would direct the Krotona School as the attendance had dropped considerably. Now the progress of the Krotona School can embark on a new cycle on a quieter, firmer foundation.

In the weeks that followed, Alfred wondered in what way he could possibly still be of service to Theosophy and to Krotona. He offered to work an afternoon in the Krotona Library. Alberta Weston was the Librarian and had several volunteer assistants who handled the desk one afternoon a week. But some days Alberta had to work without any help. She seemed pleased that Alfred could help. Edward Northam, a retired Major of the US Army, was the only man to volunteer in the library. But a day or so later, Alberta had the unpleasant duty to tell Alfred that his services would not be needed in the library.

On Wednesday, May 17, 1972, Krotona honored Dr. Taylor and Nell at the Ojai Valley Inn for their five years as head of the Krotona School, and Nell as the School Secretary. They received a plaque inscribed to him as "Head of the Krotona School of Theosophy, 1967-1972". Mrs. Loring M. Myers presented it to him for the hosts, Mrs. Larion Latham and Sylvia and Donald Chase of Taormina Lane.

As Alfred had written and published several articles for theosophical journals, he now turned to writing his first book on Theosophy to point out the wisdom that is

apparent in our experience, if we know how to see it. After several months, the manuscript was almost finished. But something was bothering him, and his energy seemed to diminish as a growing moroseness seemed to envelop him. While he was serious ill, Joseph Ross stayed as a caregiver to help Nell through this difficult time, but the Krotona Board of Directors sent a registered letter that as a visitor his stay could not be more than two weeks in any calendar year regardless the circumstances. Notice to terminate his stay at Krotona was within 48 hours leaving Nell on her own to care for Dr. Taylor. He suddenly had a brain seizure and had to be taken to the hospital where he remained a few days until he was later moved to a convalescent hospital in Thousand Oaks. He died there on August 6, 1973, at the age of 77. Born 1896 in Pautucket, RI on January 11th. After some time, The Theosophical Publishing House, Wheaton, published Alfred's book in 1975 under the title *Our Human Heritage: The Wisdom in Science and Experience*. Other books published were: *Understanding Through the Ancient Wisdom and Modern Science*, Theosophical Publishing, Wheaton, Ill, 1959. *The Secret Doctrine: Commentaries and Analogies*, Krotona School of Theosophy, Series I, 1970, Series II, 1971. Alfred made contributions to science and philosophy journals, including *Main Currents in Modern thought*, *Theosophist*, and *American Theosophist*.

Nell C. Taylor passed away on January 31st, 2018, in Ojai, California at the age of 93.

In the 1980's, under Joy Mills' directorship, the rear offices were added to the school building along with the constructing of the student residences, making it possible for more students to stay on Krotona. In 1993, Joy left Krotona to become general secretary of the Theosophical Society in Australia. Shirley Nicholson directed the school from 1994 until 1997. The school was without a director for three years, and then by 2000, Dr. Nelda Samarel became director when she and her husband, Jack, moved to Krotona. By 2009, Maria Parisen became the school director. History of the Krotona School is covered in the series on the history of Krotona.

Part II

HISTORIC KROTONA HISTORY REPEATS ITSELF

It's not quite like taking stock in the storeroom of a department store, but the idea is essentially the same. Krotona has never inventoried its historical assets; photos, oral history recordings, building designs, original maps, and historical artifacts are some items, and taking stock of what makes them as special is figuring out just what it is they have to offer the community of Ojai. But instead, Krotona is busy removing historical fabric so to update to the 21st century.

The Krotona leaders have too great an interest in things modern, although the interest is not in itself undesirable, but needs to be balanced with the preservation of the traditional. This is evidenced in the current vogue in the Western World of collecting antiquities for use in modern settings. All that is new should be assimilated together with the old and not looked upon as a relic of the past, and merely replaced.

Should Krotona ever decide to pursue historic designation for some of their structures, they would have to take inventory of properties and their artifacts to determine which, under federal and state law, are eligible for historic designation.

However, once the survey is complete, it will still be up to the city of Ojai to decide which buildings will be given historical distinction. Most importantly, Krotona is not up for consideration, because they do not have an enormous amount of historical fabric in place, because care should have been taken to preserve what is unique, so it isn't lost. Krotona's historical fabric, already part of Ojai's identity, could become even more so if the integrity had been kept intact, meaning that they haven't significantly changed Krotona, and could still qualify for historical landmark status.

Fifty years from now, what Krotona leaves will not be historic, so it's very important to take care in what they do now.

It's too soon to tell what the overall reaction might be, for the journey is only just beginning. It is unethical, as disrespectful for the central idea upon which Krotona was founded to replace what the founders built with something more modern just to be part of the modern architecture of today.

Even in our mature age, we still enjoy listening to accounts of good stories or of unusual events. In one sense of the word "history" is drama; it is the drama of human experiences; and, therefore, we usually find something, which captures our attention in the different historical accounts.

To many people, history is but the record of the past, full of dry facts. To some, it is a record of the past, which may serve as a guide for the present as well as the future. To others, history has philosophical meaning in that events are successive revelations of the infinite manifesting itself in the finite. History is philosophical in the sense that the record of man's actions and reactions provides a basis or intellectual discussion and criticism. If, as the proverb states it, experience is the best teacher, then history has significance greater than the mere happening of events themselves.

We do not wish to imply that so-called spiritual organizations such as Krotona have already fulfilled their destined course, but we hold that such organizations do have a certain mission to perform and that their destiny is not left to mere chance. Krotona is a center of learning, of learning the laws of truth in action. That is, application must keep pace with theory.

For Krotona to become a real Center it must have a distinct message, one which offers more than the proliferation of new age movements, and that is the brotherhood based not on tolerance of the many "others" but based on the indivisible unity of all races of humanity and of all life forms. Community is a fact in nature, and intelligence is preserved though the form perishes.

Organizations rise and fall, not because of some accidental force or because of the whim and caprice of some Supreme Intelligence, but rather they come into being to fulfill their role in the universal scheme of things. Differences in organizations exist so that significant experiments in human life and human relationships may be carried out.

Many facts in history seem to have significance other than the mere occurrence of the events themselves.

Thus, history repeats itself. Library shelves are filled with volumes of historical data and accounts of historical events, but where are the volumes that deal with events as a philosophy of history, or that deal with history as a mighty cultural thread, which runs through the loom of time? Is history merely the accidental occurrence of events, or is it the record of Life revealing itself in space and time? The point of view, which we adopt, will greatly influence our interpretation of the events.

If Life is not merely a blind chance, then events must have some significance and must have some reasonable explanation. If history were taught in the light of philosophy, historians might add to our light on the old question: why have historical landmarks?

A very serious inquiry has arisen in the minds of many concerning the future of Krotona. Why have they not maintained archives with such unique items depicting the community's history? However, in recent years insightful strides of specific utopian movements have appeared; interest in the hundreds of utopian communities, such as Krotona, that dot the American past and present has in general flourished more among antiquarians and local history buffs who deserve high praise for preserving endangered sites and saving crumbling records.

To the best of our knowledge, an aspect that has yet to receive special attention at Krotona is the place of the library within its archives. The purpose of the Krotona Library is on the one hand, to aid and support for scholars of archival material with rare first edition books, not just theosophical books.

Krotona should be standing like a rock against all such cheapening and betrayal of their historical fabric, and especially the rewriting of its own history. It is the residents of Krotona, through lack of critical examination of their own doings, such as secrets within the Esoteric School, or set going these ideas that the past of Krotona must go. This discredits Krotona not only in the community of Ojai, but also around the world.

Residence of Krotona tells the writer that he is deluded, but they too quickly assume that Krotona is not. The matter of what is delusion and what is truth is not so easily disposed of. The condition at Krotona has constantly undermined its growth and expansion, eating like a worm at the heart. Just observe it, it is a fact.

If Krotona is to survive, if it is to attract those whom it has always endeavored, and generally failed, to attract, it will have to change its ways entirely. By failing so to do, it will undergo the inevitable fate of everything that is but a form, an empty shell from which its native spirit has departed.

Krishnamurti held that study centers should be beacons of light in the years to come. He raised many issues in that light, such as *“How do they become truly religious places? How does a physical place become sacred space? What is the ambience, [perfume] that will hold the sacred?”*

It is reported that Krishnamurti said in 1983, regarding Brochwood, that today and in the future a Study Center must be more than a school. Maybe we should enquire the same question to the Krotona Institute as a study center?

Krishnamurti felt that the very word 'ashrama' had traditional connotations, for it was too much a part of the Hindu consciousness, as he changed it to a study center. Dr. George Arundale used the name ashrama for his organization at Adyar, and published pamphlets under that heading. Let's read what Krishnamurti dictated to Sunanda Patwardhan at Vasanta Vihar on January 26/27, 1984, regarding his insight on study centers:

“They [these centers] must last a thousand years unpolluted, like a river that has the capacity to cleanse itself; which means no authority whatsoever for the inhabitants. And the teaching in themselves have the authority of the truth. It is a place for the flowering of goodness, where there is a communication and cooperation not based on work, an ideal, or personal authority. Cooperation implies not around some object or principle, belief, and so on, but a sharing of insights. As one comes to the place, each one is his work, working in the garden or doing something [else], may discover something as he is working. He communicates and has a dialogue with the other inhabitants, to be questioned and doubted in order to see the weight of the truth of his discovery. So, there is a constant communication and not a solitary achievement, a solitary enlightenment or understanding. It is the responsibility of each one to bring about this sense—that if each one of us discovers something basic anew, I am not personal, but it is for all people who are there to share.

“It is not a community. The very word ‘community’ or ‘commune’ is an aggressive or separative movement [away] from the whole of humanity. But it does not mean that the whole of humanity comes into this place. It is essentially a religious center according to what K has said about religion. It is a place where not only is one physically active but there is a sustained and continuous inward watching. So, there is a movement of learning where each one becomes the teacher and the disciple. It is not a place for one's own illumination or one's own goal of fulfillment, artistically, religiously, or in any other way, but rather a place for sustaining and nourishing one another to flower in goodness.

“This is not a place for romanticists or sentimentalists. This requires a good brain, which does not mean an intellectual [brain] but a brain that is objective, is fundamentally honest to itself, and has integrity in word and deed. This place must be of great beauty, with trees, birds, and quiet, for beauty is truth, and truth is goodness and love. The external beauty, external tranquility, and silence may affect the inner tranquility, but the environment must in no way influence the inner beauty. Beauty can only be when the self is not; the environment, which must have great wonder, must in on way be an absorbing factor like a

*child's toy. Here, there are no toys but inner depths, substance, and integrity that is not put together by thought."*⁴

One would like to remind theosophists, that no organization, including the Krotona Institute, can be religious; what is a religious mind? Throughout history, religious organizations have been sectarian, divisive, and hierarchical. If the Krotona Institute is to be a place of deep honesty, the awakening of intelligence during confusion and conflict that is taking place in the world today, it depends on the people of Krotona, their awareness, attention, and affection.

Patwardhan relates that when there were strained working relations between some colleagues at Brockwood, Krishnamurti wrote to him:

*"You should all work together, help each other to grow, to flower. If there are any misunderstandings among you, as here are sure to be, they should be dissolved immediately by talking things over, and not postponed to the next day or even the next hour. If postponed, the misunderstandings will grow and become barriers between you. I would most strongly urge you, if I may, not to keep each other's work in separate, watertight compartments. We are all working together, either externally or inwardly."*⁵

The above could be a mirror for the same strained working relations at the Krotona Institute of Theosophy.

Regarding a 'Study Center', Is it a method of arousing one's interest in the early stages of our awareness of becoming? In fact, the "Path" in quotes, is not something, which can be studied. Study leads to the retention of concepts and so the "Path" is entirely misunderstood. Moreover, the "Path" is not something specially existing. It is not to be found inside, outside or on the middle. Truly it is not located anywhere. The first step is to refrain from psychological knowledge-based concepts. This implies that if we were to follow the empirical method to the utmost limit, on reaching that limit we would still be unable to locate the Absolute. For we are still time bound. The way of the "Path" is spiritual truth and was originally without name or title. It was only because people ignorantly sought for the "Path" relying on practical experience without reference to scientific principles that the teachers and gurus appeared and taught them to eradicate this method of approach. We must not allow this name 'Path' to lead us into forming a mental concept of a road.

If we now set about using our intellectual minds to seek truth, listening to the teachings of others, and hoping to reach the goal through mere book learning or attending rituals, we will never succeed. Some individuals had sharp minds, such as the Brahman's of South India; they no sooner heard the teachings proclaimed than they hastened to discard all psychological learning. So, they were called 'Sages who abandoning learning, have come to rest in spontaneity' of what is. Meaning no

⁴ Patwardhan, Sunanda, *A Vision of the Sacred; My Personal Journey with Krishnamurti*, Edwin House publishing, 1999, pp.110-111.

⁵ *Ibid.*, page 82.

calculated action, nothing but spontaneous actions required meeting the demands of the passing moment. This is equated with silence or truth, which is the substance of all things, is coextensive and fills the entire world of phenomena. In these days we only seek to stuff ourselves with book knowledge and deductions, seeking everywhere for more knowledge and calling this spiritual practice. Literacy is by no means essential to the mastery of truth. We do not know that so much knowledge from book learning and deduction has just the contrary effect of piling up obstacles. Merely acquiring a lot of knowledge makes us like a child who gives himself indigestion by eating too many chocolates. Those who study the "Path" in quotes according to the rules of the ER or ES are all like this. All we can say is that we who suffer from indigestion with so-called spiritual book knowledge and deductions are not digesting it. It becomes poison and keeps us to the plane of sorrow, and ignorance. Changing what is is the beginning of sorrow. In the Absolute, there is nothing at all this kind. Krishnamurti broke completely with the Discipleship, Pupils, Masters, evolution, etc., for they are concepts, and poisons. That of which Krishnamurti is speaking, is the remedy. We cannot mix the two. For those interested what Krishnamurti spoke about, see the reference to poison, and the remedy in Volume VI, *Krishnamurti's Departure from the Theosophical Society*. If you do not deal with the root of the problem, how can you kill a poisonous thing?

If only this could be understood, there would be no more doubts about it in our minds. Above all, it is essential not to select some teaching from the ER or the ES, including Krishnamurti suited to a certain occasion, and being impressed by it. There is no unalterable teaching for truth. We just must put all thought activity to rest and thus achieve silence.

George Arundale allowed a movement of his mind to result in many concepts dealing with the coming Maitreya. The images they created of Maitreya, Masters and Buddha are unreal. They are regarded as outside entities and therefore as apart from the Absolute, or truth. These mental concepts and external perceptions are misleading, as they lead us into dualism, and illusion. Any concept of sentient beings in need of deliverance *creates* such beings as objects to whom we worship.

We have always been one with the Absolute, Krishnamurti calls it the ground. We must not pretend we can regain or attain to this oneness by various practices or rituals as indicated in the Egyptian Rite. We cannot become what we have always been; we can only become watchful, aware of the thought-mind creating clouds of illusion. How can we approach the truth through rituals and words? If we seriously want to understand, we must know that a sudden comprehension, and immediate insight comes when the mind has been purged of all the clutter of conceptual and discriminatory thought-activity. We who seek the truth by means of intellect and book learning only get further and further away from the ground.

Though others may talk of the Way of Krishnamurti's teachings, or the way of Theosophy as something to be reached by various studies, practices, rituals, or even by an account of a dialogue of Krishnamurti, we must have nothing to do with these ideas. The so-called Krishnamurti Teachings are the expression of truth, which we must find for ourselves. A perception, an insight, sudden flash as blinking, that subject and object are one, might lead to a deeply mysterious wordless understanding; and by that understanding will we awake to the truth.

See Volume V: *Krotana, Theosophy & Krishnamurti: 1927-1931*.