Water, Power and Technology: The Los Angeles Aqueduct 1913-2013

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September through December 2013
In November 1913, the City of Los Angeles completed construction of the first Los Angeles Aqueduct. In commemoration of the centennial, Special Collections staff reviewed its vast Water Resources Collection for exhibit materials on this technological marvel and the controversies that surrounded its construction. See how the City of Los Angeles grew in the shadow of the desert; how a semi-arid landscape was transformed into lush gardens. See who envisioned such a feat and why they chose Owens Valley as the aqueduct’s source - and what happened when they did. The photographs, schematics, and reports detailing the construction reveal the many challenges and debates that have continued since 1913. As the exhibit makes clear, this initial aqueduct project did not slake the city’s thirst for water and led to the massive state-wide system in place today.

**From Desert to Metropolis** (case #1)

*Los Angeles the wonder city ; a pictorial presentation of life in this great and growing metropolis on the west coast.* [Los Angeles: C.P. Grossman, circa 1931] - F869.L8 L678 1931x - Pages from this item appear in cases #2 & #3

**Mount San Antonio** photograph, #chc00196, Mountains - Views folder, Claremontiana Photo Archive

“*Old Baldy*” and orange groves photograph, Mountains - Views folder, Claremontiana Photo Archive

**The Players and The Place** (case #3)
Eaton, Fred. *Owens River Valley trip: November 7th to 18th, 1905* [Los Angeles: F. Eaton], 1905 - HD1694.C2 E28 1905


**Sharing the vision: The story of the Los Angeles Aqueduct**. Los Angeles, Calif.: Los Angeles Department of Water and Power, [1988?] - TD225.L6 S5 1988

Geological Survey (U.S.). *Owens Valley Map*, Owens Valley Collection, H.Mss.0595, Water Resources Collection, box #2

**Innovative Construction** (case #4)


Los Angeles (Calif.). Board of Public Service Commissioners. *Complete report on construction of the Los Angeles aqueduct; with introductory historical sketch; illustrated with maps, drawings and photographs*. Los Angeles, Department of Public Service, 1916 - TD 225 L7 A35 - Plate #4 General profile of the Los Angeles Aqueduct
Reopening core wall excavation for San Fernando Dam which was filled by storm flow, photograph, 1912 April 12, #R1-4, Fred C. Finkle Papers, h19xx.22, box 29

Looking northerly along Placerita Cañon inverted siphon, photograph, 1912 April 12, #R2-5, Fred C. Finkle Papers, h19xx.22, box 29

Lower end of Los Angeles Aqueduct, about 25 miles northerly from city, photograph, 1912 April 12, #R2-3, Fred C. Finkle Papers, h19xx.22, box 29

Rotten concrete disintegrating rapidly in cover of L. A. Aqueduct, Antelope Valley section, photograph, 1912 April 15, #R5-1, Fred C. Finkle Papers, h19xx.22, box 29

Lower end of concrete culvert being constructed at San Fernando Dam, 1912 April 12, photograph, #R2-1, Fred C. Finkle Papers, h19xx.22, box 29


Innovative Construction (case #5)
Los Angeles (Calif.). Board of Public Service Commissioners. Complete report on construction of the Los Angeles aqueduct; with introductory historical sketch; illustrated with maps, drawings and photographs. Los Angeles, Department of Public Service, 1916 - TD 225 L7 A35 - Plate #14 Profile and cross section South Haiwee Dam Plate #21 Standard type of concrete siphon

Haiwee Dam looking west along middle of fill, photograph, 1912 April 19, #R11-3, Fred C. Finkle Papers, h19xx.22, box 29

Haiwee Dam, looking east along middle of fill, photograph, 1912 April 19, #R11-1, Fred C. Finkle Papers, h19xx.22, box 29

Looking along Soledad inverted siphon from south end, photograph, 1912 April 13, #R3-1, Fred C. Finkle Papers, h19xx.22, box 29


Artesian well near L.A. Aqueduct, this is the best well but has a small flow, photograph, 1912 April 18, #R9-4, Fred C. Finkle Papers, h19xx.22, box 29

Completed L.A. Aqueduct looking north from first road bridge north of Lone Pine, photograph, 1912 April 18, #R8-1, Fred C. Finkle Papers, h19xx.22, box 29

Looking up completed L.A. Aqueduct from intake gate near headworks, photograph, 1912 April 18, #R8-12 Fred C. Finkle Papers, h19xx.22, box 29

Los Angeles (Calif.). Board of Public Service Commissioners. Complete report on construction of the Los Angeles aqueduct; with introductory historical sketch; illustrated with maps, drawings and photographs. Los Angeles, Department of Public Service, 1916 - TD 225 L7 A35

Photograph from Taylor, Raymond G. Men, medicine & water: the building of the Los Angeles aqueduct, 1908-1913; a physician’s recollections. [Los Angeles, Calif.]: Friends of the LACMA Library with the assistance of Los Angeles Department of Water and Power; distributed by Dawson’s Book Shop, 1982 - TD 229 L7 T39X

Challenges and Controversy (case #6)
Owens Valley Property Owners Protective Association. A Message for Owens Valley - The Valley of Broken Hearts. Sacramento Union, 1927, Owens Valley Collection, H.Mss.0595, Water Resources Collection, box #1

Kinsey, Don Jackson. The water trail: the story of Owens Valley and the controversy surrounding the efforts of a great city to secure the water required to meet the needs of an ever-growing population. Los Angeles, Calif.: Department of Water and Power, c1928 - TD225.L7 K5 1928


Wood, R. Coke (Richard Coke). The Owens Valley and the Los Angeles water controversy; Owens Valley as I knew it. [Stockton, Calif., University of the Pacific, 1973] - HD1694 C2 W6

Los Angeles (Calif.). Department of Water and Power. Vacationland. 1927 July, Owens Valley Collection, H.Mss.0595, Water Resources Collection, box #2

Lewis, I. G.  *Statement by the Owens Valley Reparations Association of business conditions in Owens Valley as of September 1, 1926*. Owens Valley Collection, H.Mss.0595, Water Resources Collection, box #1


**Challenges and Controversy** (case #7)


Outland, Charles F.  *Man-made disaster; the story of St. Francis Dam, its place in southern California's water system, its failure and the tragedy of March 12 and 13, 1928, in the Santa Clara River Valley*. Glendale, Calif.: A.H. Clark, 1963 - TC558.U7 Sa5


Cecil, George H.  *Babylon’s fate a warning: Permanence of our water resources above and under ground our sole hope if we survive*. Wheeler Scrapbooks, page 114 - http://ccdl.libraries.claremont.edu/col/wsc


Frampton, Robert C. (photographer).  *San Antonio flood control channel and “the sponge”* aerial photograph, #4-490b, Robert C. Frampton Collection

**Beyond the Aqueduct** (case #8)

Fox, Charles Kirby.  *Availability of the Mono waters for use in coastal zone of southern California, including a comparison of the cost & returns from the Owens Valley aqueduct*. Los Angeles, Calif. : [s.n.], 1930 - HD1694.C2 F83 Av2

Los Angeles (Calif.). Board of Water and Power Commissioners.  *Mayor Porter’s statement on Owens Valley and Mono Basin land purchases*. 1930 June 24, Owens Valley Collection, H.Mss.0595, Water Resources Collection, box #1

**Water Bureau Purchase of Land a Forward Step**. Evening Herald, 1930 October 1. Owens Valley Collection, H.Mss.0595, Water Resources Collection, box #1


**On the wall**


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