Preserving the Source

An e-newsletter from the Water Resources Archive

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INTERNATIONAL TRAVELS

I recently travelled to Florence, Italy – via a fascinating book about the 1966 flood of the Arno River. (Pictured: Dark Water by Robert Clark.) I’ve also been doing more international travel than usual while working on collections in the Water Resources Archive. Though we focus on Colorado, many people here take their water expertise abroad and bring back documentation, so our collections relate to six of the seven continents. (Antarctica, anyone?) Going new places is always enlightening. Let’s see where this e-newsletter will take you.

—Patty Retting, Archivist, Water Resources Archive

WATER PUZZLER

This widely travelled civil engineering professor would have been 100 years old on August 30 of this year. He arrived at Colorado A&M (now CSU) in 1947, where he remained active for more than 50 years. He is pictured above, at right, visiting the Great Wall of China in 1974. Perhaps best known as an architect of the Peace Corps, this man’s efforts reshaped water resources research at CSU and raised the university’s profile as a scientific research institute, while his work in international development led to the creation of organizations and opportunities worldwide. Though he passed away in 2009, his legacy lives on, including through his 275 boxes in the Water Resources Archive, our largest collection.

Who was this man?
TRAVEL GUIDES

Two of our newest collection guides relate to gentlemen of international origin. They both settled in Colorado in part for the water expertise already here.

Evan Vlachos, a native of Greece, began teaching sociology at Colorado State University in 1967. In 1973, he received a dual teaching appointment in both sociology and civil engineering. Beyond CSU, Vlachos consulted for multiple foreign governments and several international organizations. His collection of 18 boxes of files contains his research, writing, and presentations on his widely varied interests and expertise.

B. T. A. Sagar likely just missed having Dr. Vlachos as a professor, as he completed his Ph.D. at CSU in hydraulics and hydromechanics in 1973. A native of India, Sagar remained in Colorado and worked as a hydro-mechanical engineer for ECI for most of his career. Beyond the U.S., his work focused on gates and valves for irrigation and hydropower projects at facilities in Indonesia, Thailand, the Philippines, Peru, and many other locations. His collection of 6 boxes documents just some of his work through reports, specifications, drawings, and manuals.

Another new collection guide details the American Water Foundation, a non-profit organization based in Denver that had goals both to assist in the development of other countries and to increase U.S. exports. The organization only lasted a decade, but had a number of Colorado engineers on its board of directors, including the men from our puzzler. The AWF’s 10 boxes are about half administrative files and half program files, showing what kind of training the organization was providing to international water professionals.

ABROAD IN COLORADO

The state of Colorado was carved from other U.S. territories, but preceding that, much of what is now southern and western Colorado used to be part of Mexico. This includes the southern end of Colorado’s San Luis Valley, which was established as the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant in 1848. Issues related to Mexican land grant laws still affect the town of San Luis and its surroundings, including access to the mountain tract known as La Sierra. In 1978, the Land Rights Council formed as a grassroots advocacy organization to protect the community’s rights, which involve both the land and water. The Council has since been involved in extensive litigation as well as educational and ecological endeavors. Their collection at the Water Resources Archive, containing administrative, research, and legal files, has recently been digitized and put online.
TRAVEL THROUGH TIME

When you talk to water professionals about their careers, you never know where their stories will take you. It is just this kind of time travel and unique information that a new project intends to capture. The Water Resources Archive is partnering with the Poudre Heritage Alliance to record oral history interviews with water leaders across the state who have recently retired or who are nearing the completion of their careers. We intend to have broad representation across the basins, water sectors, and professions.

The interviews will be transcribed, with the recordings and transcriptions made available through the Water Resources Archive. The Poudre Heritage Alliance will further use the recordings to make educational video clips available to the public. Other organizations, educators, the media, and any researchers will be able to use the information to create presentations, films, articles, and books, or to simply listen and learn from those who have created our water future by their decades of work. Donations to the Poudre Heritage Alliance, specifying the “Water Legacy Heritage Video Series,” will help us get this project underway. To nominate a Colorado water professional who should be recorded, email us with their name and contact information.

PUZZLER ANSWER: MAURY ALBERTSON

Learn more about him in the Guide to the Papers of Maurice L. Albertson and view more of his 1,000 China photos online.

This electronic newsletter provides updates about the Water Resources Archive. To be added to this distribution list, please send an e-mail that includes your name and a request to subscribe.

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