REASONS TO CELEBRATE

This time of year inspires both reflection and gratitude. At the Water Resources Archive, we are especially grateful for the community’s support for our efforts in preserving and making accessible Western water history. In reflecting on the past semester, we have a great story to tell about educating tomorrow’s leaders. In reflecting on what is to come next, we have some big plans, and we hope you’ll join us to celebrate! We also hope you’ll enjoy the puzzler, again tied to Colorado State University’s sesquicentennial celebration.

–Patty Rettig, Archivist, Water Resources Archive

SAVE THE DATE!

Mark 4/4/2020 on your calendar and plan to join us in Fort Collins for Water Tables, a fundraising dinner for the Water Resources Archive. We will be celebrating Colorado State University’s worldwide impact through
water resources education, research, and engagement. One of CSU’s 150th anniversary events, Water Tables will highlight the past, present, and future of the university’s involvement in the ever-evolving spectrum of water challenges. Notable university employees, alumni, and partners will serve as table hosts with all proceeds benefiting the Water Resources Archive. We’ll look forward to seeing you here! (Image above: Water Tables 2007)

WATER PUZZLER

Sixty years ago, on December 30, 1959, a lengthy obituary (clipped at left) memorialized a Fort Collins resident. This man had influenced civil engineering practices close to home and around the world. The obituary mentions his scientific contributions to the flume named for him, sand traps, flow-measuring devices, snow surveying methods, and the Colorado-Big Thompson project. This man was a 1904 Colorado Agricultural College (now CSU) graduate who stayed in town working for the U.S. Department of Agriculture for the rest of his career.

This man was active to the end. As stated in the obituary, “Just four hours before his death he completed a paper he intended to deliver next month at the Four States Irrigation Council meeting in Denver.” A colleague delivered that paper about the Vane Meter on his behalf, and it, along with this man’s other papers and photographs, survives in the Water Resources Archive.

Who was this man?

The answer is...

EDUCATING WITH ARCHIVES: HISTORY COMES ALIVE

The Water Resources Archive sees a variety of users, but among our most excited—and exciting—users are entire history classes. This fall, history professor Mike Childers (pictured back row, left end, with class) provided his senior capstone class with an incomparable archival experience. The course focused on “Headwaters and Rivers in the History of the American West” and featured an assignment requiring use of materials in the Water Resources Archive. For many of the students—tomorrow’s historians and educators—this was their first exposure to archival research.

The course made an impact. Dr. Childers summarized the class experience: “With topics ranging from first responders in the aftermath of the Big Thompson flood of 1976 to the complex legal history of water in the San Luis Valley, the class not only learned how to ‘do history,’ but more importantly they learned about water’s role in shaping Colorado’s history. History has come alive to the students. Every class meeting was full of stories of discovery within the archive, and the excitement of writing an original essay.”
HISTORY CAPTURED IN PARTNERSHIP
The Water Resources Archive, in partnership with the Poudre Heritage Alliance, is pleased to announce the continuation of our oral history project, which is capturing stories of today's water professionals. The Colorado Water Conservation Board approved our water plan grant application at their November meeting. This $30,000 in funding will allow us to capture at least nine recorded interviews and create three short educational videos, and hopefully more! We are most grateful.

We have completed and made available nine interviews already, with the latest being retired water rights attorney Mike Shimmin (pictured above). See all of the interviews through the Water Resources Archive and the educational videos through the Poudre Heritage Alliance. You can also donate to the project at the PHA website (choose “Water Legacy” as the specific program). To nominate a Colorado water professional to be recorded, email their name and contact information.

CELEBRATE BY GIVING
Along with gauging what is to come, this time of year becomes a season of giving. If you would like to celebrate with the Water Resources Archive and help continue our incomparable work, please consider making a donation. You can easily give online. Gifts of any amount make a difference to us and are much appreciated.

PUZZLER ANSWER:
Ralph Parshall

Though best known for the Parshall flume, which he in fact did not want named for him, Pershall contributed to many discoveries as indicated in his obituary. See the clipped obituary in his good friend Charles Lory’s diary (p.209 of the PDF). Also see the retired CSU President Lory’s Dec. 31 entry (p.207) where he recounts finding out that “Ralph Pershall, whom I love as a brother had passed away...” Learn more about Parshall in the finding aids for his archival collection as well as the Irrigation Research Papers, the documents of his USDA research team.
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.

This e-newsletter is created by Patty Rettig. Designed by Demi Connelley.