

I originally decided to work on this project in Fall 2006 for two reasons. The first reason was that I felt it was an exceptional topic to focus on for my final project for a class I was taking entitled, "Imagining Los Angeles." It was a Studio Arts/Photography class taught by Diane Meyer. The second reason was because I thought that it would expose me to parts of Los Angeles that I had never seen before. During the process of creating the project, I was also exposed to new areas of the Von der Ahe library that I was not so familiar with. One of these areas included the archives department in the Special Collections Library, which served as the basis for my research. I was never aware of the opportunity for students to utilize this department until I began the second part of my research. The task seemed daunting at first because I had never used maps for research before, and the fact that some of these maps were over 100 years old made the process that much more overwhelming. I soon realized it was a simple process of searching and that the only enemy was time. Once I had found a method, everything began falling in place and the project started coming together more seamlessly.

Over half of the locations that I photographed were locations that I discovered while sorting through the boxes of the Wright/Hurley Map & Surveyor's Manual Collection. I would spend a few hours going through original maps from the turn of the century and search for documented areas of water with a magnifying glass. This was a very tedious process at times but I found it very rewarding because it gave me a direct link to the past and I often thought to myself, "When would I ever have the chance to hold historical documents like these again?" Many people that I had talked to about the project were not even aware of the collection and I truly felt that I was working on something that was new and refreshing. After finding areas that had signs of water, I looked at a current map of Los Angeles and tried to find their modern location. This often led to dead ends but I was not discouraged and because of the vast amount of information contained in the collection, I was able to find new locations. Once I found the area, I visited the site and photographed it. I wrote down notes and then headed back to the library to check out any relevant books that could explain some of the history behind the site or assist me in my writings.

The library was very important for me, not only because of the large amount of information that I had access to, but also for inspiration. A book like Robert Adams', *Along Some Rivers*, provided me with very little information relating to my project but it was very inspiring to read his words about nature preservation and what was going through his head when he was photographing scenes throughout the West. Another book that was very inspiring for me was *Land of Sunshine* edited by William Deverell and Greg Hise. It contained many short stories by nature writers and one of these writers struck a deep chord with me. Her name was Jennifer Price and she wrote about thirteen ways to see nature in Los Angeles. Her story helped me think of Los Angeles in new ways and gave me a completely new outlook on photographing nature in L.A.

This project took a lot of time and energy to complete from not only myself but from those around me. Diane Meyer and the staff of the Archives Department have been extremely helpful in assisting me with the completion of this project. I could have never done this without them. This was possibly the largest project that I have ever finished and it is very encouraging to know that I am capable of completing something like this.

In the end, after all the work is done, what I feel that I benefited the most from was the experience of working along side some wonderful people and the feeling of discovery while searching through the library's collection. The feeling of discovery is something that I will always treasure and if my project is added to the permanent collection of Von der Ahe Library, I know that it will be one of my proudest moments.