

2012 UNDERGRADUATE LIBRARY RESEARCH AWARD ESSAY  
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The Hannon Library was essential to this work. From start to finish different departments and collections were in use. The topic of this work is the conflict between the city of Los Angeles and Owens Valley before and after the construction of the Los Angeles Aqueduct, and how it played out in newspaper coverage on both sides.

To begin, I searched for Los Angeles on the library's website and found that the collection has an entire section of books that cover the history of the Los Angeles area in great detail. Within that section I found books that covered different parts of Southern California including Inyo County, Owens Valley, and the Eastern Sierras. My knowledge of the topic was already good at this point, and I knew I wanted to dig deeper once I knew the type of historiography work assigned for my senior seminar, *The Rise of Los Angeles*. I found Owens Valley land survey books and some included short histories or a mention in a chapter.

W.L. Chalfont's deeply personal account of the plight of Owens Valley residents stood out as the perfect source for a perspective of those in Owens Valley. This second edition book titled *The Story of Inyo*, was written by the local newspaper owner and Owens Valley resident (Big Pine, CA) documenting his first hand account of the history and events surrounding the construction of the Los Angeles Aqueduct. Published twelve years after the first edition, the book was almost completely identical except for the addition of recent events surrounding the conflict and the lawsuit by Owens Valley residents against the city of Los Angeles.

In my time at LMU I have had at least four "introduction to research" labs in the library. I learned how to search more efficiently, and where to locate primary and secondary sources through the Hannon Library website. I found journals articles, online databases, and links to highly specific digital archives only available through the Hannon Library website. In addition to all these channels is the spectacular amount of unique information only available in the Loyola Marymount University Special Collections Archives.

I found the books I needed immediately. I was able to source nearly every *Los Angeles Times* article with the search words "Owens Valley," "Aqueduct," "Mulholland," and anything related to the Water and Power or the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power. I later adjusted the search to include only articles from the newspaper's inception in 1881 through 1940 – well after the completion of the Aqueduct. This was limiting in that it was difficult to extract relevant articles. Some article only spoke of Owens Valley as a vacation destination. While other articles only mentioned water bonds or measures pertaining to various municipal water projects, making it more time consuming to find articles that were applicable.

Water in Los Angeles happens to be a topic that the Special Collections Archives at Hannon Library knows well. I made an appointment to discuss my paper topic with a Special Collections Curator Dr. Stalls and he led me directly to the J.D. Black Papers. Black was a shop owner and had property in Big Pine, California located in the center of Owens Valley. As far as primary sources go, this was a gold mine. Black kept every last scrap of paper related to the Owens Valley and particularly anything related Owens Valley water. His own writings offered an intensely personal view of the situation forced

upon this sleepy section of the Eastern Sierras. I chose eight or nine applicable boxes of his information and photos only to be overwhelmed by the amount of carefully organized data. For my work, I found letters to close confidants the most beneficial as they met the criteria of “histories from below” needed for this type of assignment.

After I found what I needed within the Hannon Library, I decided I needed to find more sources from the Owens Valley side. I once again called Special Collections to set up a meeting to discuss my plans to visit the Eastern Sierra Museum in Independence California. Located between Bishop and Big Pine, Independence is home to the Inyo County Court House and the Eastern Sierra Museum and archives. I met with a couple of Hannon Special Collections curators to discuss what I needed to do, say, not to say, and a general overview of what I could expect from a small-scale archive. Every bit of information given to me was priceless. I walked into the Eastern Sierra Museum with confidence and the tools needed to find and extract the sources I needed.

As it turned out, luck found me as one of the curators from Hannon Special Collections had a previous association with the curator from the Eastern Sierra Museum making the whole process all the more easy and open. Through careful investigation, and a scheduled trip to Owens Valley for three days, the sources I had found at Hannon Library in the way of books, newspaper articles, and archival documents, were now coming to life when synthesized with the collection in Independence. I had secondary sources I needed to supply me with a general timeline and overview, *Los Angeles Times* archived articles to provide me with a view of the ways in which the city covered the events, and the primary source documents from Special Collections’ J.D. Black documents and photographs which gave me an up-close and personal account. I was then able to connect my Hannon-sourced materials with the physical location and further documents provided by Owens Valley residents themselves. This was a great moment for a researcher. The sources were speaking to me loud and clear.

The lessons I took from this research are priceless. Through tools such as the library’s research labs, I was able to learn the system and source our in-house and online databases. Personally I like to begin with a book on the topic, something I can have in my hands immediately. From those books I found a topic to search within the online sources available only through the Hannon Library website. From those articles I found J.D. Black’s papers, and from there I followed the trail to Owens Valley where I found recently added primary sources which aided me further in my search for the story I set out to tell. I found it easy and fun to find the information I was searching for. Special Collections gave me stellar primary source information while also providing me with special skills and credibility when visiting other archives.

In total, this research has made me confident in my search for information and proud of the staff at Hannon who taught me how to command my research. From my first sit-down at the information desk when I was looking for books on Los Angeles, to my time spent in Special Collections touching the very papers of the voices that I wrote about, the experience gave me the credibility to search better, faster and more competently. I feel as though I have mastered the art of topic research and I had a wonderful time utilizing all that was made graciously available to me.