

# Colorado riverbed case records [microfilm], 1920-1931

## Overview of the Collection

<b>Title</b>	Colorado riverbed case records [microfilm]
<b>Dates</b>	1920-1931 (inclusive) 1920 1931
<b>Quantity</b>	6.25 linear feet
<b>Collection Number</b>	ACCN 1702
<b>Summary</b>	The <a href="#">Colorado riverbed case records</a> (1920-1931) consist of microfilm and microfilm printouts from this court case which determined who legally owned the riverbed of the Colorado River.
<b>Repository</b>	<a href="#">University of Utah Libraries, Special Collections.</a> Special Collections, J. Willard Marriott Library University of Utah 295 South 1500 East Salt Lake City, UT 84112-0860 Telephone: 801-581-8863 <a href="mailto:special@library.utah.edu">special@library.utah.edu</a>
<b>Access Restrictions</b>	Twenty-four hour advanced notice encouraged. Materials must be used on-site. Access to parts of this collection may be restricted under provisions of state or federal law.
<b>Languages</b>	English

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## Historical Note

The Colorado riverbed case, sometimes known simply as "the Riverbed Case," grew out of a desire by the State of Utah to determine, legally, who owned the bed of the Colorado River. The State of Utah wished to develop the bed of the river by drilling for oil and for other economic purposes. First, however, it had to be determined who owned the bed of the river: the State of Utah or the United States. This hinged on whether the Colorado could be declared a navigable or a non-navigable river. The plaintiff was the United States, and the defendant was the State of Utah. The court, presided over by Charles Warren, a Special Master of the U.S. Supreme Court, began acquiring testimony in October 1929. The final decree was issued in 1931, giving possession of the riverbed to the United States in non-navigable sections of the Colorado River Basin in Utah. Possession of the riverbed in navigable sections of the basin was given to the State of Utah.

The decision of the court was dependent on the testimony of individuals who had personal experience with the Colorado River in Utah. Most of the witnesses were river runners, both professional and recreational. Much of the testimony came from scientists and engineers who worked for the United States Geological Survey or the Reclamation Service (later the Bureau of Reclamation). Other testimony came from petroleum geologists and placer miners. Persons of notable historic importance include Frederick Dellenbaugh, a member of the second Powell expedition; Franklin Nims, photographer of the Brown-Stanton expedition; various members of the James Best expedition;

photographer Ellsworth Kolb; members of the Clyde Eddy expeditions; and members of the Pathe-Bray film expedition, to name a few. A history of powered boats, both gasoline and steam driven, is also included in the testimony. It could be said that the Colorado Riverbed Case is the largest known oral history of the men and women who utilized the Colorado River basin in Utah prior to 1929.

## Content Description

The Colorado riverbed case records (1920-1931) consist of microfilm and microfilm printouts from this court case which determined who legally owned the riverbed of the Colorado River.

## Use of the Collection

### Restrictions on Use

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### Preferred Citation

Collection Name, Collection Number, Box Number, Folder Number. Special Collections, J. Willard Marriott Library, The University of Utah.

## Administrative Information

### Arrangement

Arranged to the folder level.

### Location of Originals

Originals located in the Utah State Archives, Salt Lake City, Utah.

### Acquisition Information

Gift of John Weisheit in 1997.

### Separated Materials

Microfilm reels are located in the Manuscripts Division's microfilm case.

### Acquisition Information

Donated by John Weisheit in 1997.

### Processing Note

Processed by Heather Harkness and John Weisheit from 1997-1999.

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## Detailed Description of the Collection

### Reel 1, pp. 1-800

The [Colorado riverbed case records](#) has been digitized and it available for research online.

Container(s)		Description
<a href="#">Box</a>	<a href="#">Folder</a>	
1	1-8	Digest of Testimony Taken before Charles Warren, Special Master

### Reel 1, pp. 801-939; Reel 2, pp. 940-1600

Container(s)		Description
<a href="#">Box</a>	<a href="#">Folder</a>	
2	1-3	Digest of Testimony Taken before Charles Warren, Special Master
2	4-8	Digest of Evidence Introduced and Proceedings Had upon the Hearings before Charles Warren, Special Master

### Reel 2, pp. 1601-1869; Reel 3, pp. 1870-2400

Container(s)		Description
<a href="#">Box</a>	<a href="#">Folder</a>	
3	1-8	Digest of Evidence Introduced and Proceedings Had upon the Hearings before Charles Warren, Special Master

### Reel 3, pp. 2401-2693; Reel 4, pp. 2694-3200

Container(s)		Description
<a href="#">Box</a>	<a href="#">Folder</a>	
4	1-8	Digest of Evidence Introduced and Proceedings Had upon the Hearings before Charles Warren, Special Master

## Reel 4, pp. 3201-3665; Reel 5, pp. 3666-4000

Container(s)		Description
Box	Folder	
5	1-8	Digest of Evidence Introduced and Proceedings Had upon the Hearings before Charles Warren, Special Master

## Reel 5, pp. 4001-4437; Reel 6, pp. 4438-4800

Container(s)		Description
Box	Folder	
6	1-8	Digest of Evidence Introduced and Proceedings Had upon the Hearings before Charles Warren, Special Master

## Reel 6, pp. 4801-5346; Reel 7, pp. 5347-5600

Container(s)		Description
Box	Folder	
7	1-8	Digest of Evidence Introduced and Proceedings Had upon the Hearings before Charles Warren, Special Master

## Reel 7, pp. 5601- 6321; Reel 8, pp. 6322-6400

Container(s)		Description
Box	Folder	
8	1-8	Digest of Evidence Introduced and Proceedings Had upon the Hearings before Charles Warren, Special Master

## Reel 8, pp. 6401-7200

Container(s)		Description
Box	Folder	

Container(s)	Description
9      1-8	Digest of Evidence Introduced and Proceedings Had upon the Hearings before Charles Warren, Special Master

### Reel 8, pp. 7201-7208; Reel 9, pp. 7209-7558

Container(s)	Description
Box      Folder	
10      1-4	Digest of Evidence Introduced and Proceedings Had upon the Hearings before Charles Warren, Special Master

### Reel 10, Letter to the Secretary of War to Appendix C, Plates 1-37

Container(s)	Description
Box      Folder	
11      1	Letter to Secretary of War
11      2	Diary and Miscellaneous Notes, Exhibit 2
11      3	"The Upper Colorado River and Its Utilization," Exhibit 65
11      4	Treaty with the Navajo Indians, Exhibit 71
11      5	United States Geographical Surveys, Exhibit 73
11      6	"Report of Special Survey and Examination of the Green and Colorado Rivers," Exhibit 75
11      7	"Rapids, Rapid Water, and Quiet Water, Colorado, Green, and San Juan Rivers," Exhibit 80
11      8	"Characteristics of Colorado, Green, and San Juan Rivers: Current Meter Discharge Measurements," Exhibit 82
11      9	"Profile Tables, Colorado, Green, and San Juan Rivers," Exhibit 83
11      10	"Comparison of the Slopes of Colorado, Green, and San Juan with other Rivers," Exhibit 84

Container(s)	Description
11 11	"Brief Description of Colorado, Green, San Juan Rivers and Tributaries," Exhibit 85
11 12	"Stream Flow Characteristics Base Gaging Stations," Exhibit 88
11 13	Exhibits 137 and 507
11 14	Miscellaneous Notes and Documents
11 15	Index of Witnesses and Exhibits; Complete List of Complainant's Exhibits
11 16	Appendix C, Plates 1 to 37, Accompany Report on Special Survey and Examination of Green and Colorado Rivers

**Reel 10, *The Times Independent* , 17 September 1925; Reel 11, *The Times Independent* , 17 September 1925 to No. 14 Original, vol. 1, p. 748**

Container(s)	Description
Box	Folder
12 1-3	Colorado River News Items, Moab, Utah Paper, 1896-1927, Exhibit 460
12 4	"The Colorado River Plateau"
12 5-6	Appendix A, Photographs #1 to #13 and Plate #1 to Report of Special Survey and Examination of Green and Colorado Rivers
12 7-10	No. 14 Original. Abstract in Narrative Form of the Testimony Taken before the Special Master, and filed in His Court by Him, vol. 1, pp. 1-748

**Reel 11, No. 14 Original, vol. 2, pp. 749-1005; Reel 12, No. 14 Original, vol. 2, p. 1006 to Defendant's Expectations**

Container(s)	Description	Dates
Box	Folder	
13 1-4	No. 14 Original, Abstract in Narrative Form of the Testimony Taken before the Special Master, filed in His Court by Him, vol. 2, pp. 479-1426	

Container(s)	Description	Dates
13 5	No. 14 Original, Brief for the United States of America	1930
13 6	No. 15 Original, Brief of Defendant, the State of Utah	1929
13 7	No. 15 Original, Brief of the United States	1929
13 8	No. 14 Original, The United States of America, Complainant vs the State of Utah	1931
13 9	No. 14 Original, Defendant's Expectations to the Report of the Special Master	1930

## Names and Subjects

### Subject Terms :

Mines and mineral resources--Environmental aspects--Utah

### Geographical Names :

Colorado River (Colo.-Mexico)

Colorado River (Colo.-Mexico)--Environmental conditions

United States--Trials, litigations, etc.

Utah--Trials, litigation, etc.

Finding aid created by Heather Harkness and John Weisheit  
1997 (last modified: 2020)



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