

Utah Division of State History Annual Conference 2022

Water Heritage in the West: How Water Shapes Communities Over Time

Water shapes our institutions and communities, manipulates landforms, and creates landscapes. Water also forms an important part of our cultural heritage. Water heritage associated with water use and management, including infrastructures like canals, irrigation ditches, and ponds, and intangible heritage like stories and myths, reveals how past and present communities adapt to uncertain climatic conditions. Climatic uncertainty, water conservation efforts, economic development, and increasing tourism in the Mountain West mean that water heritage is rapidly being modified or destroyed. Water heritage like open canals have long been essential to settlement and development in the region, and especially in arid states like Utah. Once such heritage is destroyed, scholars and the public are unaware of its significant role in the historical culture of settlements and community organization. Long-term and interdisciplinary approaches to understanding water heritage across time and space can highlight broad and universal patterns of water-human relations. Knowledge of this entwined relationship informs our ability to cope with current and projected climatic fluctuations like drought and extreme heat. This session takes a long view of water-human relations by bringing together a set of interdisciplinary papers on water heritage that extend both academic research and cultural resource management.

Contributions

The Longue Duree of Water Heritage in Utah

Anna S. Cohen and Molly Boeka Cannon
(Utah State University)

Indigenous Water Harvesting in Cub
Creek, Dinosaur National Monument

Judson Byrd Finley (Utah State University)

Irrigation Usage at the Historic Muir-Poulson House
Erin Haycock (Utah State University)

Water as Historic Infrastructure

Zachary Nelson (Bureau of Reclamation) and Chris Merritt
(Utah State Historic Preservation Office)

Organizers

Molly Cannon
Assistant Professor



Anna S. Cohen
Assistant Professor



Contact

molly.cannon@usu.edu
anna.cohen@usu.edu

Connect



Water Heritage
Anthropological
Project

