



A box of records at Special Collections on the UNR campus contains 29 Lake Tahoe pamphlets, some dating back to 1895.  
PHOTO/JERI CHADWELL

# Tahoe in town

## Lake archives

**The opportunity to explore Lake Tahoe is** an exciting prospect for locals and visitors alike. The lake has a lot of offer in the way of recreation, entertainment and history. But many may be unaware that right here in Reno there's a repository of information about Tahoe that—in archival terms—is as vast as the lake itself. It's housed in the Special Collections Department at the University of Nevada, Reno.

Special Collections is located on the second floor of the Mathewson IGT Knowledge Center, the university's library. It's open to the public, and, according to manuscripts and archives librarian Jacquelyn Sundstrand, it holds a treasure trove of information for people curious about Lake Tahoe.

"We have [records from] organizations that were up there," she said. "There's some reminiscences. We have some different things with maps. We have Lake Tahoe pamphlets. ... An awful lot of these pamphlets go back to 1895. ... And we have oral histories from people. And most of those transcripts are online as well."

The materials cover topics ranging from art to environmental activism and scientific endeavors.

"One of our premier collections, and one of the basic ones we build off of is going to be the information about snow runoff, which is based off of the work of Dr. James Church, who used to be, surprisingly, a classics professor here near the beginning of the 1900s," Sundstrand said. "And he is the one who perfected how you go about measuring the snow and

how much water it contains, so you know more about stream runoff, which, of course, helps you with crops, lake levels, river flows."

The James Church collection is stored in 69 boxes that Sundstrand said contain both his personal and academic correspondence.

"He was on an international commission," she said. "He was also working very specifically with the Western Snow Conference. The Western Snow Conference, by the way, will be meeting here in Reno [this year]."

The Western Snow Conference provides a forum for individuals and organizations to share scientific, management and sociopolitical information concerning snow and runoff. Its 87th annual meeting will take place in Reno from April 15 to 18.

Digging further into the archives, one can find information about groups and historic meetings that happened at the lake. Take, for instance, a box containing the records of the Foresta Institute for Ocean and Mountain Studies. Founded in 1960 in Washoe Valley by Richard and Maya Miller, this non-profit research organization was a pioneer in environmental education. Its flagship program was an educational summer camp program at the lake for students—but Foresta was also involved in international initiatives supported by organizations like the United Nations.

In yet another box are working papers, handouts, attendance sheets and cassette tapes from a citizen's forum held by the League of Women Voters on Dec. 4, 1976. The group met to discuss governmental structures they thought necessary for the protection of the lake.

According to Sundstrand, Special Collections' materials are searchable online, including the department's massive photo collection—most of which has been digitized and includes thousands of Lake Tahoe photos.

"We're also here to help," she said. "We're always here to try to help people access our materials and, hopefully, find the things they need to find."

Learn more about Special Collections by visiting UNR's website or calling 682-5665. Those seeking research help can email [specoll@unr.edu](mailto:specoll@unr.edu).

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