



## Fluid Arguments: Five Centuries of Western Water Conflict

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Water—or the lack of it—has shaped the contours of the American West and continues to dominate the region's development. From the incursions of the Spanish conquistadores to the dams of the New Deal era, humans have sought water in these arid lands as the key to survival and success. And as the West becomes more urbanized, water is an issue as never before. This book sets contemporary and often bitter debates over water in their historical contexts by examining some of the most contentious issues that have confronted the region over five centuries.

Seventeen contributors—representing history, geography, ethnography, political science, law, and urban studies—provide an interdisciplinary perspective on the many dimensions of water in the West: Spanish colonial water law, Native American water rights, agricultural concerns, and dam building. A concluding essay looks toward the future by examining the impact of cities on water and of water marketing on the western economy.

As farmers and ranchers from Kansas to California compete for water with powerful urban economies, the West will continue to be reshaped by this scarce and precious resource. *Fluid Arguments* clearly shows that many of the current disputes over water take place without a real appreciation for the long history of the debate. By shedding new light on how water allocation is established—and who controls it—this book makes a vital contribution to our understanding of water and growth in the region.

## CONTENTS

Divining the Past: An Introduction / Char Miller

### Part 1. Land and Water on New Spain's Frontiers

1. "Only Fit for Raising Stock": Spanish and Mexican Land and Water Rights in the Tamaulipan Cession / Jesús F. de la Teja
2. Water, the Gila River Pimas, and the Arrival of the Spanish / Shelly C. Dudley
3. "Between This River and That": Establishing Water Rights in the Chama Basin of New Mexico / Sandra K. Mathews-Lamb

## **Part 2. The Native American Struggle for Water**

4. Maggot Creek and Other Tales: Kiowa Identity and Water, 1870-1920 / Bonnie Lynn-Sherow
5. The Dilemmas of Indian Water Policy, 1887-1928 / Donald J. Pisani
6. First in Time: Tribal Reserved Water Rights and General Adjudications in New Mexico / Alan S. Newell
7. Winters Comes Home to Roost / Daniel McCool

## **Part 3. Agricultural Conundrums**

8. Water, Sun, and Cattle: The Chisholm Trail as an Ephemeral Ecosystem / James E. Sherow
9. Private Irrigation in Colorado's Grand Valley / Brad F. Raley
10. A Rio Grande "Brew": Agriculture, Industry, and Water Quality in the Lower Rio Grande Valley / John P. Tiefenbacher
11. Specialization and Diversification in the Agricultural System of Southwestern Kansas, 1887-1980 / Thomas C. Schafer
12. John Wesley Powell Was Right: Resizing the Ogallala High Plains / John Opie

## **Part 4. Dam those Waters!**

13. Private Initiative, Public Works: Ed Fletcher, the Santa Fe Railway, and Phoenix's Cave Creek Flood Control Dam / Donald C. Jackson
14. The Changing Fortunes of the Big Dam Era in the American West / Mark Harvey
15. Building Dams and Damning People in the Texas-Mexico Border Region: Mexico's El Cuchillo Dam Project / Raúl M. Sánchez

## **Part 5. The Coming Fight**

16. Water and the Western Service Economy: A New Challenge / Hal K. Rothman



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