



Media Release

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Marriott Library to Showcase Treasures Documenting the History of Electric Power

February 2, 2012 – The University of Utah’s J. Willard Marriott Library unveiled historic collections of photographs and manuscripts chronicling the first 100 years of what is now Rocky Mountain Power.

Salt Lake City was the fifth city in the world to install central station electric street lighting, following large cities like London and New York. Rocky Mountain Power, formerly Utah Power & Light Co., brought electricity to the region around the turn of the century which allowed for the rapid development of mining and other emerging industries, and played a big role in urban and residential planning.

In celebrating its centennial, Rocky Mountain Power has contributed a vast collection of fascinating materials – vintage photographic materials such as glass negatives, albumen prints and “magic lantern slides,” which were viewed through an antique projector with a candle for illumination. Accounting ledgers, work orders, and blueprint planning documents of power houses and distribution lines (both above and below ground) were also displayed. The collection spans from 1885 through 1985, with a few images from the early 1990’s.

In August of 2010, Rocky Mountain Power contracted the U’s Marriott Library to clean, preserve, and digitize more than 3,000 photographs and negatives. The manuscripts and photos are currently being indexed and will be accessible to the public at the George S. Eccles Special Collections Reading Room on level 4 of the library.

Collection Highlights

- Photographs of L.L. Nunn, 19th century entrepreneur who partnered with George Westinghouse to engineer hydroelectric power for mining operations in Colorado
- Diagrams illustrating the energy conversion process at the Arco Borax nuclear plant in Idaho
- Interiors and exteriors of power plants evolving over the century with energy demands of a rapidly growing population
- Large section showing miles and miles of power lines (transmission) crisscrossing the West
- The Teton Dam collapse
- Original Salt Palace dome
- Black and white photos depicting people using electric power in various antiquated ways over the decades
- Ledgers containing the supply, planning, litigation and financial details
- Planning documents of power houses and lines
- 1876 Articles of Incorporation and meeting minutes of the Salt Lake City Railroad Company, of which Brigham Young was the president
- *The Synchronizer* from 1927 that was published by and for the employees of the Utah Power and Light Company. It contains a section of photographs and short stories illustrating the successes of electricity, specifically the use of Holidays lights on the outside of your home and the use of an electric stove and oven to cook for family and friends during the holiday season.

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