

## **FINDING AIDS TO WRCA MANUSCRIPT COLLECTIONS ONLINE**

*by Randal Brandt*

In October 1998, the Water Resources Center Archives became a participant in the California Digital Library's Online Archive of California (OAC), a union database of encoded archival finding aids. Finding aids are inventories, registers, indexes or guides to collections held by archives and manuscript repositories, libraries, and museums. Finding aids provide detailed descriptions of collections. Access to the finding aid is essential for understanding the true content of a collection and for determining whether it is likely to satisfy a scholar's research needs.

The OAC Project is a pilot project to develop a prototype database of archival finding aid data. The OAC database will serve as the foundation for the development of a full-scale digital archive for the University of California System available via the Internet. In addition to finding aids from the nine UC libraries, the database includes the California State Library, the Huntington Library, Stanford University, several California State Universities, and many others.

At this writing, there are 35 WRCA finding aids available. Among them are finding aids to the Charles Derleth, John D. Galloway, Walter L. Huber, Charles Gilman Hyde, and Fred C. Scobey collections. Other major WRCA collections, including J. B. Lippincott, John S. Eastwood, and Charles H. Lee, are being converted to machine-readable text and will be available in the near future.

The finding aid records include biographical information for the collectors, access points, scope and content notes, and detailed container lists for each collection. It is possible to locate individual items within collections using the search feature of the OAC. The OAC is searchable at the collection, repository, and institution levels, or the entire database can be searched for documents on particular topics. Searching is performed using keywords (e.g., Central Valley Project) and all occurrences of the word or phrase are highlighted.

The database is available to the public via the Internet, which means that potential users are able to preview the collections from their own computers. Since many of the WRCA collections are stored off-campus, this saves users valuable time because they can contact WRCA and request the material from our storage facility before coming to the library. The impact of having these finding aids available in a searchable format has already been felt. WRCA's collections can be found at: <http://sunsite2.berkeley.edu:28008/dynaweb/oac/berkeley/wrca/>

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**Test your knowledge of California geography.**



*Can you identify the mountain peak in the photograph?*

(Answer is at the bottom of this page.)

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**FREE PUBLICATIONS**

The following duplicates were received at the Archives and are available free by sending email to Kathy Dieden, or calling (510) 642-2666.

*Free publications no longer available.*

**Answer to the photo puzzle:**

Cathedral Peak on Sunrise Trail (C.H. Lee Photograph Collection #295). The peak is located 9 miles west-southwest of Tioga Pass on the Mariposa-Tuolumne County line.