

6-15-2019

## **Guide to PH090 Building the American Dam in El Paso photograph album**

Abbie Weiser

*University of Texas at El Paso*, [ahweiser@utep.edu](mailto:ahweiser@utep.edu)

Follow this and additional works at: [https://scholarworks.utep.edu/finding\\_aid](https://scholarworks.utep.edu/finding_aid)

---

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Special Collections Department at ScholarWorks@UTEP. It has been accepted for inclusion in Finding Aids by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks@UTEP. For more information, please contact [lweber@utep.edu](mailto:lweber@utep.edu).

Guide to  
PH 090  
Building the American Dam in El Paso photograph album  
1936 – 1938 Span Dates

Processed by Abbie Weiser  
June 15, 2019

Purchased from McBride Rare Books.

Citation: Building the American Dam in El Paso photograph album, 1936 – 1938, PH090, C.L. Sonnichsen Special Collections Department. The University of Texas at El Paso Library.

C.L. Sonnichsen Special Collections Department  
University of Texas at El Paso

## Historical Sketch

Located on the Rio Grande (El Paso), 140 feet north of where the west bank of the river enters Mexico, the American Dam is a diversion dam constructed in 1937 and 1938. The dam started operating in 1938 under the International Boundary and Water Commission (IBWC) and its American Dam Field Office in El Paso (Upper Rio Grande Projects). According to the IBWC, "The American Dam and Canal Project provides the means for physical control and division of waters in the Rio Grande River." The dam is 284 feet long with thirteen radial gates. It cost \$667,398 to construct the American Dam, which regulates "the quantity of water delivered to Mexico and the United States irrigators from the Rio Grande under the 1906 Convention by diverting the United States allotment of water to the American Canal for United States irrigators and releasing to the river downstream the waters allotted to Mexico."

The creator of this photograph album is unknown though two men in the photographs are identified as Fred and Lionel (surnames unknown).

[Sources: Leon C. Metz "American Dam" in the *Handbook of Texas Online* <https://tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/rua03>; "Upper Rio Grande Flood Control Project", International Boundary and Water Commission website [http://www.ibwc.state.gov/Organization/Operations/Field\\_Offices/URGFPC.html](http://www.ibwc.state.gov/Organization/Operations/Field_Offices/URGFPC.html); description of item from McBride Rare Books]

## Series Description or Arrangement

The loose pages and photographs were left in the order found by the archivist.

## Scope and Content Notes

The Building the American Dam in El Paso photograph album, PH090, contains 289 silver gelatin photographs primarily in corner mounts on twenty loose album pages. About half of the images in the album show the construction of the American Dam and Canal along the Rio Grande (1937 – 1938). In addition to the American Dam and Canal images, the album contains photographs of Ciudad Juárez, Mexico; Colorado; Arizona; and New Mexico. These images show various engineering, railroad, and construction projects and workers. The photographs date 1936 – 1938. Most of the images are identified by location, and two of the men in the album are identified as Fred and Lionel (surnames unknown).

## **Provenance Statement**

Purchased from McBride Rare Books of New York, New York, April 2019.

## **Restrictions**

None.

## **Literary Rights Statement**

Permission to publish material from the Building the American Dam in El Paso photograph album must be obtained from the C. L. Sonnichsen Special Collections Department, the University of Texas at El Paso Library. Citation should read, Building the American Dam in El Paso photograph album, PH090, C. L. Sonnichsen Special Collections Department, the University of Texas at El Paso Library.

## **Notes to the Researcher**

A few of the photographs are loose. Please handle with care.

See also:

Texas Water Resources collection

Rio Grande Compact Commission records

## Container List

Box #	Folder #	Title	Date
1	-----	Building the American Dam in El Paso photograph album [289 silver gelatin prints on twenty loose pages]	1936 – 1938