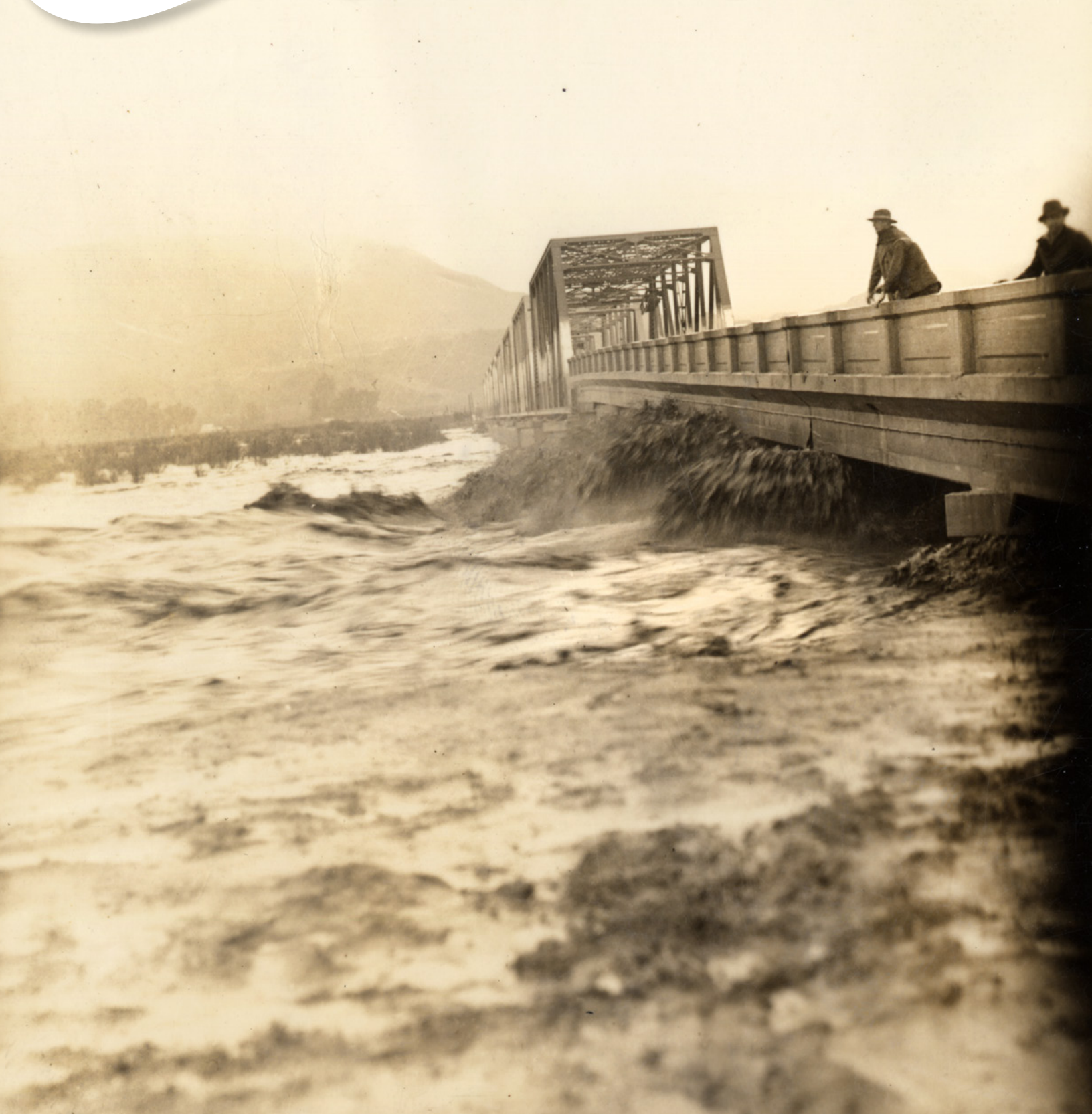


CALIFORNIA  
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# Bulletin





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# Bulletin

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# Introduction to Law's Rare Book Room

By Angelica Illueca

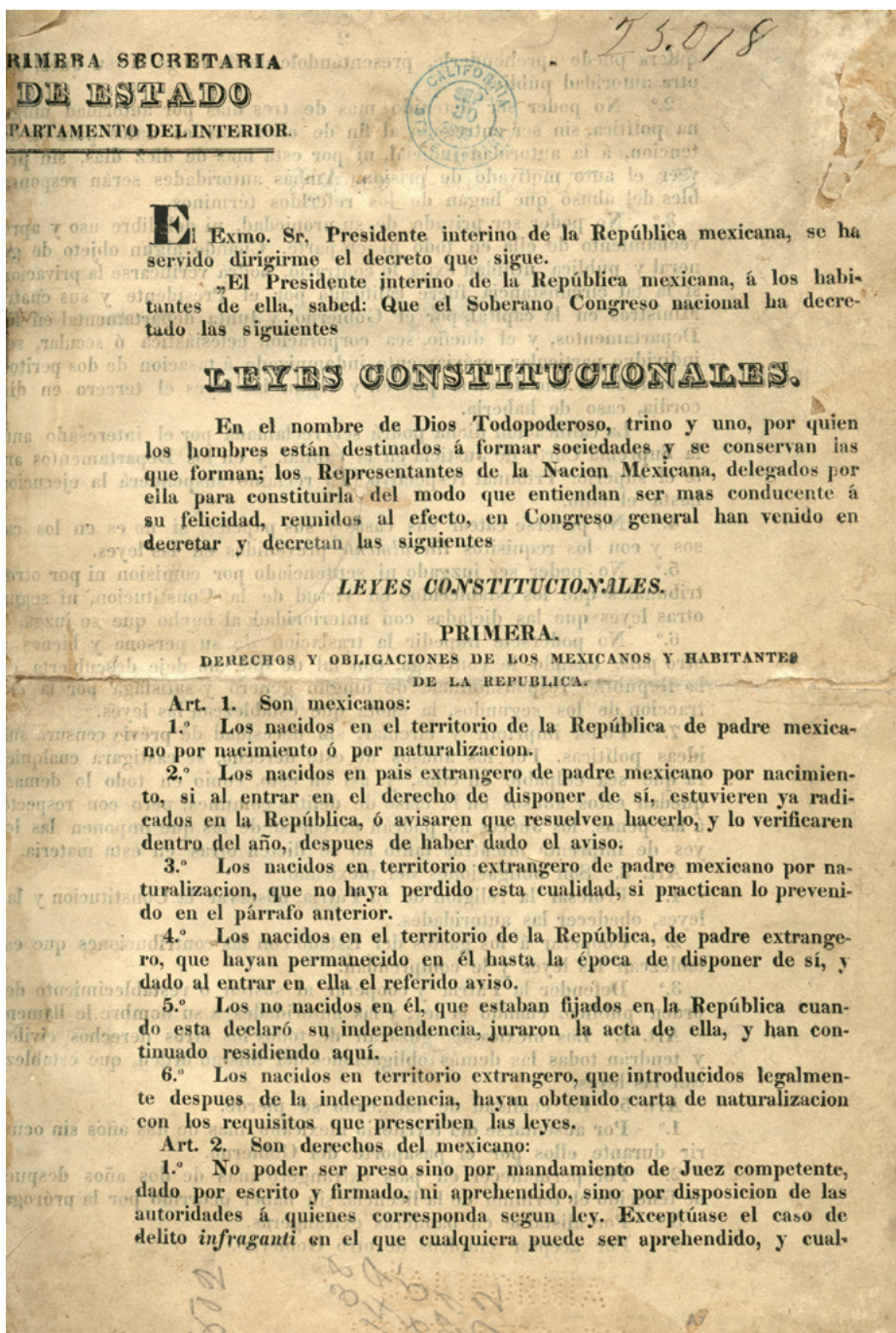
Visiting the California State Library (CSL) is a fun start to any adventure in California's capital city. Established in 1850, the State Library is known for its diverse collection of materials, including photos, digital books, and a wealth of historical items. One section of the State Library, the Witkin State Law Library, is primarily utilized for its extensive collection of California and Federal laws, guides and publications, and both legislative and regulatory resources. However, not many people are aware that the Law Library also houses a collection of historical legal books protected in a separate climate-controlled and secured room because of their status for being precious and often difficult to find.

At first glance, the term "historical legal books" doesn't sound like it would include much more than historic bills or materials pertaining to regulatory history research. However, these historical legal books have been categorized as rare books and are valued for their historical perspective and value to researchers. Although there is not a universal standard for what constitutes a rare book, we factor the age, condition, historical importance, unique characteristics, research value, and scarcity in other research libraries. These exceptional items are part of a special collection of books that find protection in a room on the third floor of the California State Library, known to Law Library staff as the Rare Book Room.

Our rare books are not often displayed side by side with other historical materials in the law collection. However, they do







## 1836 • Leyes Constitucionales • Mexico Constitution

*The constitutional laws of 1836. Known as the Siete Leyes (Seven Laws), they were enacted under President Antonio Lopez de Santa Ana to serve the primary purpose of concentrating power in the president and his immediate subordinates, fundamentally altering the structure of the first Mexican Republic. At a time when the independence of Mexico was in question, the Siete Leyes served to centralize and strengthen the federal government.*

complement the primary collection matter by providing scholars and researchers with broader and more comprehensive information on subjects pertaining to historical legal research. The collection consists of several subjects, with some materials dating to the 16<sup>th</sup> century, and includes books in languages such as English, Spanish, Latin, Castellano, French, and Ancient Greek.

Strengths of the collection include the following:

- Laws of Mexico
- Maritime Law
- Civil Law
- Canon Law
- Trials and Executions
- Spanish Law
- Laws of England
- Laws of Scotland
- Laws of the Cherokee Nation
- Cases and Opinions
- Roman Civil Law
- London State Trials
- Great Britain Laws
- Irish Laws
- Historical Legal Dictionaries
- United States Laws



With the assistance of the California State Library Foundation (CSLF), the Law Library will be showcasing a new subject from the Rare Book Room materials in each CSLF Bulletin edition. In addition, to provide patrons with greater access to our available rare print materials, we will be displaying them in dedicated online exhibits via the State Library's website. The Wit-

kin State Law Library is open to the public with Law Librarians available to administer access to our special collections and assist patrons with their research needs. We hope you will join us for future CSLF Bulletin articles and online CSL exhibits as we share with you the rare books that our Law Library is fortunate to have housed as part of the Rare Book Room Collection.

## 1709 • *A General Treatise of the Dominion of the Sea; and a Complete Body of the Sea-Laws*

*This text contains information of great value about various ancient laws, including those of the Rhodians and Romans. Included are the opinions of several eminent lawyers regarding important marine cases. Widely used was the comparison of English and French conduct in their sea affairs. First published in 1705 with additional editions printed in 1709 and 1710 which included the law of piracy, letters of marque, and reprisal.*

