

Writing Assignment

Choose a time period from the three below. Imagine a character from that time period. Tell a story about a water event through your character's eyes. Possible water events that you might want to describe:

- Spring flood in the Rio Grande
- Finding water in the desert
- A Thunderstorm in the desert
- Opening the gate of an acequia to let the water flood your fields

In the first paragraph, describe your surroundings. In the second paragraph describe the event. In the third paragraph describe how the event impacts you.

Be sure to use as much sensory information as you can in your writing. This will allow your reader to understand who you are and feel that they are experiencing the event along with you.

Before Spanish Colonists

In My Mother's House by Ann Nolan Clark

Lakes are the holding-places for water, as the fireplace is the holding-place for fire, as the plaza is the holding-place for people. I know a lake in the mountains; my grandfather told me about it, my father told me, my mother's brother told me but my heart is the holding place, my heart is the keeping place for the things I know about that lake in the mountains. Always will I keep in my heart the things that belong there, as lakes keep water for the people. (page 24)

Up in high places rivers are little; I can step over them, they are so little. Little rivers bring their waters to bigger rivers. The biggest river is the Rio Grande; it takes the water from the little rivers and keeps it for its own. (Page 25)

See Brown fields . . . Soon the rains will come and wet you, and give you water for your baby corn seeds sleeping. The sun will call the corn seeds; the rain will call the corn seeds; they will push up . . . Brown fields you will turn to green . . . Little green corn ears dancing, for the rain, for the sun. (page 17)



Negative Number021529 **Title**Woman carrying water jar on head, Laguna Pueblo, New Mexico **Date Original**1915 **Courtesy** Palace of the Governors, Santa Fe



Photograph provided by the San Diego Museum of Man

Spanish Colonists Build Acequias

Juan the Bear and the Water of Life, retold and translated by Enrique R. Lamadrid and Juan Estevan Arellano, illustrated by ay Cordova

The same afternoon the people in the village below joyfully shouted, "Allí viene el agua, allí viene la puntera, here comes the water," as they embraced and lifted their wooden hoes into the air. They could not believe their eyes . . . They carefully routed the acequia to give all the families all the water they needed. Up above and down below more wheat was planted. In the highest cultivated plots they planted haba beans, cabbage, peas, potatoes, turnips and beets. Further down were the pinto beans, the corn, the squashes, and the kitchen gardens of radishes, carrots, herbs and greens. Near the river they planted orchards of apples, pears, quinces, apricots, cherries, and plums. Hay for the animals was plentiful and abundant all along the edges of the valley. (page 38)

Spanish Pathways: Readings in the history of Hispanic New Mexico by Marc Simmons

New Mexicans of yesteryear were in the habit of uttering a little proverb that summed up the morality of irrigation: Agua que no has de beber, déjale correr. "Water that you don't need, let it run." In other words, be frugal in consumption and leave some for the neighbors farther down the acequia. That was a wise admonition in a land of water-scarcity. (page 123)



Negative 015754 **Creator**Wittick, Ben **Title**Acequia Madre, Albuquerque, New Mexico **Date Original**1881
Courtesy of Palace of the Governors, Santa Fe



Title Acequia, 1939 , Center for Southwest Research, UNM, elibrary

Cowboys are Anglo, Spanish, and Native American!

Making a Hand: Growing up Cowboy in New Mexico by Max Evans:

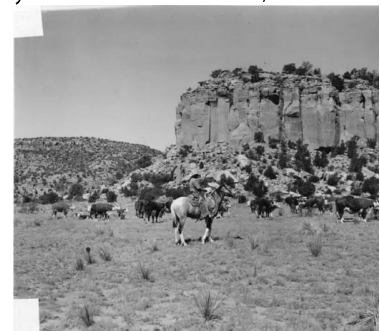
"A cowboy kid has to learn . . . Never dismount when the saddle horse is watering. Horses' ancient equine genes tell of times when lions, tigers, and other predators waited at water holes, attacking and killing while their heads were down drinking. Horses will bolt backwards possibly catching riders in midair, throwing them against the ground . . ." page 16

"It was a dry year, so Ed decided to spend a day checking water holes . . . Joe got dry throat at the first tank and said he was terribly thirsty . . . Ed just rode on. We all did . . . At last we came to a windmill. [windmills pump ground water up into tanks] There was a rock holding tank with about six to eight inches of dirty greenish water and a few bugs swimming in it. The horses were glad to partake. They sure didn't mind a few bugs . . . Joe was what some would call aghast. "Why that's filthy. I can't drink that nasty stuff. Look at the bugs in it."

Ed said, "Joe, you just ain't very thirsty then." page 28



Negative 158568 **Title**Branding scene, Ray Brothers Ranch near Roy, New Mexico **Date Original**1914
Courtesy of Palace of the Governors, Santa Fe



Negative HP.2007.20.621, NM Tourism Bureau, **Title** Cowboy herding cattle, Palace of the Governors, Santa Fe