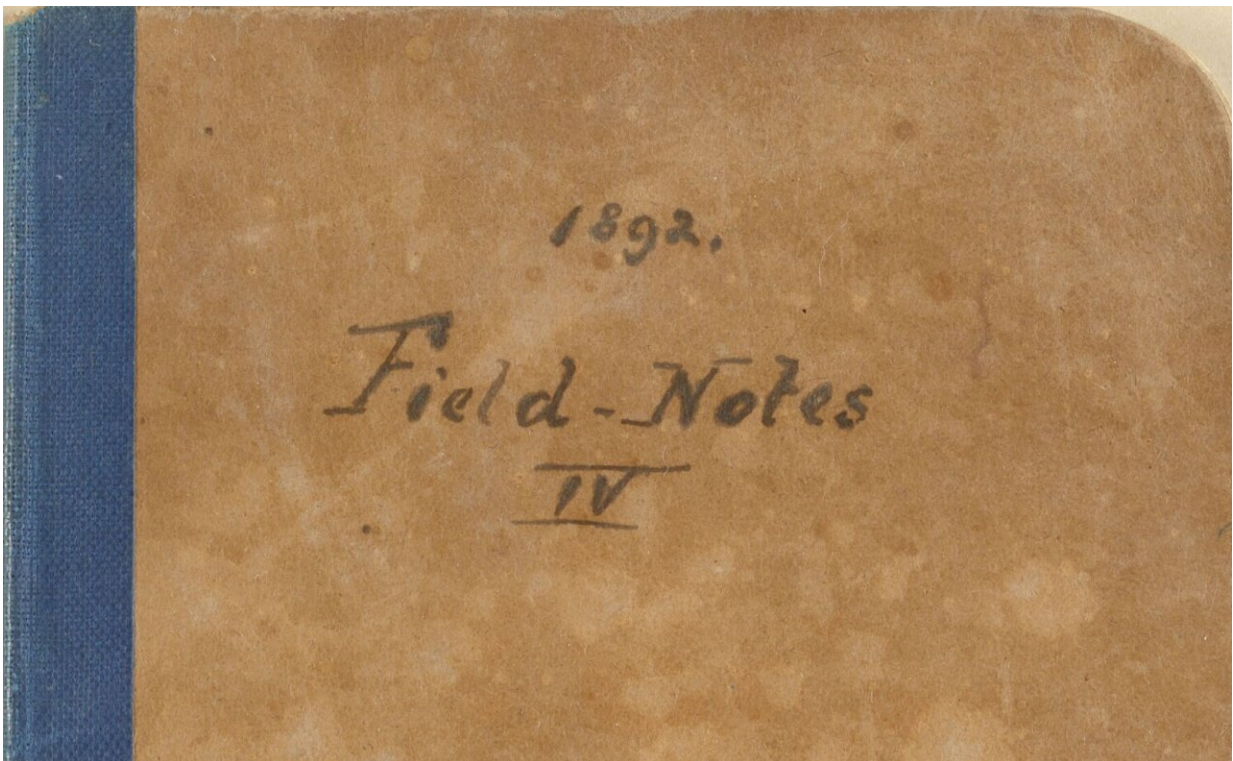


Rare glacier research notebooks now available digitally

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Credit: University of Colorado at Boulder

Over 140 documents from notebooks and reports that feature first-person accounts of glacial landscapes from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries are now available to the public through the [CU Digital Library](#).

These [expedition](#) notebooks and reports come from the Roger G. Barry glaciology collection, which was donated to the CU Boulder Libraries' Archives from the National Snow and Ice Data Center (NSIDC) in 2017. The contents include glacier and ice discoveries from early expeditions to Alaska and U.S. National Parks, daily logs documenting observations such as weather and occasional interactions with indigenous communities.

Head of Archives Megan Friedel says these notebooks and reports are cornerstone primary sources for early glacier research in Alaska and the Lower 48 states, and that digitizing them is part of the Archives' commitment to documenting the history of natural science and the environment, aligning with the university's involvement in climate change research.

"We are proud to be able to democratize access to sources like these that document glacial change in key parts of the world, through digital projects that make these materials publicly available online," Friedel said.

The expedition books come from Lawrence Martin, a geographer who studied advances and recessions of glaciers with the National Geographic Society on the Alaska Peninsula and other locations in southcentral Alaska from 1903–1913; geologist Louis L. Ray who kept field notes and diary reports from U.S. Geological Survey expeditions to Alaska in 1931; geophysicist Harry Fielding Reid, whose handwritten notebooks describe his expeditions to Alaska from 1890–1892, including daily weather reports, discussions of travel, glacier observations, and sketches of landscapes, including glaciers; and National Park Service glacier survey reports from 1919–1975.

"More people will now be able to use these rich resources documenting not only glacier and [weather conditions](#) from the 19th and 20th

centuries, but also the practical day-to-day experience of traveling in Alaska," Ashlyn Velte, senior processing archivist with the University Libraries' Archives said. "Plus, the digital versions are easier to handle than the fragile originals."

Florence Fetterer, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) liaison for the NSIDC anticipates the expedition notebooks and documents will be particularly useful to researchers interested in the history of science.

"I hope that those who have support to do data rescue projects may also comb expedition notebooks for old data that are not yet available, and key the data and get numbers online too. Longer records strengthen the certainty of projections—that is one reason why that sort of data rescue is important," Fetterer said. "Another is that expedition notebooks give context to observations. They may describe the setting in which an observation was taken, and perhaps how and how well a project was financed and by whom. These contextual things can be important when a later researcher is assigning an uncertainty to an observation, for example."

The University Libraries Archives believe that Roger G. Barry, who was the director of the now NSIDC, thought of the expedition notebooks and their contents as history that belongs to everyone. We are thrilled to be able to make these notebooks accessible worldwide.

Provided by University of Colorado at Boulder

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