



**NEWS RELEASE**  
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## **Rare Books Damaged by Water Leak Are Back in State Library's Collection**

**(Sacramento)** Books damaged by a water leak last winter have been returned to the California State Library following a successful freeze-drying process that extracted water and prevented mold.

The books, all from the General Rare Book Collection, were damaged when a leak in the roof was discovered after a rain and hail storm hit the Sacramento region in February. The water damaged an estimated 250 volumes, several of which were from the 1800s.

With assistance from California State Parks and BELFOR Property Restoration of Sacramento, all the damaged books were able to be salvaged.

“The State Library – and the State of California – owe a debt to State Parks and BELFOR Property Restoration of Sacramento,” said Greg Lucas, California State Librarian. “Both acted quickly and generously. BELFOR, in particular, made their freeze-drying equipment available to restore these irreplaceable volumes.”

When the leak was discovered, the damaged books were immediately transported to a California State Parks' Statewide Museum Collections Center to be frozen, an important step in the salvage and conservation process.

“We had just finished a freezing cycle, so we were fortunate we were able to accommodate the State Library's rare books in this emergency,” said Parks museum curator Jena Peterson.

BELFOR Property Restoration of Sacramento contacted the State Library to volunteer its services to extract water from the most seriously damaged books. “BELFOR was able to utilize our Mobile Thermal Vacuum Freeze Dryer unit to restore the multiple volumes of rare books, and we are always happy to help our local community,” said Melanie Uhrenholt of BELFOR.

Additional less damaged books were dried on-site at the State Library. Library Preservation staff will determine which books need further repair to their covers or spines before they can be reshelved.

### ***About the California State Library***

About the State Library: Founded in 1850, the California State Library has an extensive collection of documents from and about the state's rich history, ranging from books, maps, miners' diaries, newspapers, and periodicals to photographs, paintings and posters. The State Library also holds federal and state publications, and is home to the Bernard E. Witkin State Law Library, and the Braille and Talking Book Library. [www.library.ca.gov](http://www.library.ca.gov)