

Canal Zone Library-Museum Panama Collection
A Finding Aid to the Collection in the Library of Congress



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Washington, D.C.
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Prepared by Karen Linn Femia with the assistance of Kathleen Kelly and Scott McLemee

Collection Summary

Title: Panama Collection of the Canal Zone Library-Museum

Span Dates: 1804-1977

Bulk Dates: (bulk 1850-1950)

ID No.: MSS81178

Creator: Canal Zone Library-Museum

Extent: 12,700 items ; 38 containers plus 18 oversize ; 18.4 linear feet ; 8 microfilm reels

Language: Collection material in English, French, and Spanish

Location: Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Summary: Canal Zone Library-Museum in Balboa Heights. Correspondence, diaries, memoirs, financial and legal papers, technical drawings of canal plans, photoprints, and other papers collected by the library-museum concerning the planning and construction of the Panama Canal and business and cultural aspects of the Canal Zone.

Selected Search Terms

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the Library's online catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically therein.

People

De Sablá family--Trials, litigation, etc.

De Sablá family.

Eisenhower, Dwight D. (Dwight David), 1890-1969.

Lesseps, Ferdinand de, 1805-1894.

Sidell, William Henry, 1810-1873. William Henry Sidell papers. 1849.

Organizations

Canal Zone Baseball League.

Canal Zone Library-Museum.

Compagnie nouvelle du canal de Panama.

Compagnie universelle du canal interocéanique de Panama.

Isthmian Canal Commission (U.S.)

Isthmian Historical Society.

Natural History Society (Canal Zone)

Panama Canal Company.

Panama Railroad Co.

Panama Water Works.

Subjects

Canals--Panama.

Places

Canal Zone--History.

Canal Zone--Social life and customs.

Panama Canal (Panama)

Panama--Commerce.

Panama--History.

Administrative Information

Provenance

The Panama Collection of the Canal Zone Library-Museum was transferred from the Panama Canal Commission to the Library of Congress in 1978.

Processing History

The Panama Collection of the Canal Zone Library-Museum was arranged and described in 1993. The oversize series was reorganized and the register revised in 2006.

Transfers

Some materials from the collections were sent to the Library's Prints and Photographs, Geography and Map, and Hispanic divisions.

Copyright Status

The status of copyright in the unpublished writings in the Panama Collection of the Canal Zone Library-Museum is governed by the Copyright Law of the United States (Title 17, U.S.C.).

Access and Restrictions

The Panama Collection is open to research. Researchers are advised to contact the Manuscript Reading Room prior to visiting. Many collections are stored off-site and advance notice is needed to retrieve these items for research use.

Microfilm

A microfilm edition of part of these papers is available on eight reels. Consult a reference librarian in the Manuscript Division concerning availability for purchase or interlibrary loan.

Preferred Citation

Researchers wishing to cite this collection should include the following information: Container number or reel number, Panama Collection of the Canal Zone Library-Museum, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Scope and Content Note

The Panama Collection of the Canal Zone Library-Museum spans the years 1804-1977. The bulk of the material dates from the second half of the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth century. Documents are in French, Spanish, and English. The collection was gathered in Panama by the Canal Zone Library-Museum, which is associated with the United States Panama Canal Commission. Due to the Panama Canal Treaty of 1977 with the Republic of Panama, which transferred the canal from the United States to Panama at the end of the twentieth century, the commission decided to transfer the special collections of the Library-Museum to the Library of Congress. As the manuscript collection of another institution, the material from the Library-Museum is a diverse set of papers generated by many individuals and organizations. Most of the files relate to the involvement of foreign individuals and organizations in the planning and eventual construction of a Panamanian interoceanic canal. Also included is material on the Panama Railroad, various business and real estate interests in Panama, and the social and cultural life of the Canal Zone. There is a tremendous range in the types of documents in the collection, including correspondence, diaries, memoirs, mementos, legal files, property deeds and titles, contracts, financial ledgers, technical drawings, and ephemera relating to social clubs.

The collection has been arranged into four series. The first series, [Personal Papers](#), contains mostly diaries, memoirs, and correspondence, with the largest part consisting of the papers of the de Sablá family. The first member of this French family to reside in Panama arrived in the 1840s from the French Caribbean colony of Guadeloupe. The family owned a bakery and a large tract of land called Bernardino in Panama, and members became involved in many business interests: the Panama Railroad Company, Panama Water Works, canal ventures, a telegraph company, and mining. In 1932 heirs of the family, who were United States citizens, sued the government of Panama for damages done to family property. Most of the de Sablá family papers consist of legal papers and supporting documents for *United States ex rel de Sablá v. Panama*. A set of maps from the de Sablá family papers has been transferred to the Geography and Map Division. Other highlights of the Personal Papers series include a diary by William Henry Sidell, the principal engineer of the Panama survey of 1849, and memoirs and correspondence by several canal construction workers.

The [Organizations File](#), the second series in the collection, contains records of social clubs, institutions, and businesses in Panama and in the Canal Zone. Included are materials from the Isthmian Canal Commission and two nineteenth-century French canal companies, the Compagnie nouvelle du canal de Panama and the Compagnie universelle du canal

interocéanique. Many technical drawings and reports are among the records of the French companies. Records of the Canal Zone Baseball League, Isthmian Historical Society, and Natural History Society may also be found in this series.

The Canal Zone Library-Museum had organized some of its manuscript material at the item level. These items have been placed with other disparate materials in a series of [Miscellaneous Manuscripts](#). Included are individual pieces of correspondence, writings, printed matter, ephemera from cultural events, mementos, and congressional testimonies of eleven officers of the Isthmian Canal Commission. Mounted in a memorial volume dedicated to George W. Goethals, the chief engineer of the Panama Canal, are many fine photoprints of the canal's construction. Notable correspondents include Dwight D. Eisenhower and Ferdinand de Lesseps.

The final series in the collection consists of a set of [booklets](#) concerning legal and legislative matters in Panama and the Canal Zone. Copies of the title pages have been arranged alphabetically for use as an index.

Organization of the Papers

The collection is arranged in five series:

- [Personal Papers, 1804-1977](#)
- [Organizations File, 1849-1976](#)
- [Miscellaneous Manuscripts, 1806-1976](#)
- [Booklets, circa 1900-1976](#)
- [Oversize, 1814-1970](#)

Description of Series

<i>Container</i>	<i>Series</i>
BOX 1-11	<p><u>Personal Papers, 1804-1977</u></p> <p>Diaries, memoirs, correspondence, writings, and legal and business papers. Arranged alphabetically by name of the person or family. Diary of William Henry Sidell available on microfilm. Shelf no. 12,191</p>
BOX 12-32	<p><u>Organizations File, 1849-1976</u></p> <p>Correspondence, minutes of meetings, financial material, contracts, printed matter, advertisements, canal plans, technical drawings and reports, posters, newspaper clippings, menus, scrapbooks, photographs, and ephemera. Arranged alphabetically by type or name of club, business, institution, or organization. Containers 14-21 have been microfilmed, but the film consists of a negative copy and is not available for reader use. Shelf no. 20, 869-7N.</p>
BOX 32-35	<p><u>Miscellaneous Manuscripts, 1806-1976</u></p> <p>Correspondence, printed matter, autograph collections, bibliographies, mementos, ephemera, writings, photographs, passports, and congressional testimony. Arranged alphabetically by topic, name of person, or type of material.</p>
BOX 36-38	<p><u>Booklets, circa 1900-1976</u></p> <p>Booklets concerning legislative and legal matters in the Republic of Panama and the Canal Zone. Arranged in alphabetical groupings by Container and preceded by an index comprised of photocopied title pages.</p>
BOX OV 1-OV 18	<p><u>Oversize, 1814-1970</u></p> <p>Oversize real estate documents, printed matter, books, posters, technical papers, financial material, and scrapbooks. Organized and described according to the series, folders, and containers from which the items were removed.</p>

Container List

<i>Container</i>	<i>Contents</i>
BOX 1-11	Personal Papers, 1804-1977 Diaries, memoirs, correspondence, writings, and legal and business papers. Arranged alphabetically by name of the person or family. Diary of William Henry Sidell available on microfilm. Shelf no. 12,191
BOX 1	Clark, James, diary, 1851-1852 Cole, Harry O., memoir, 1947 Crystal, Thomas Bibliographies, 1967-1968 Book draft, 1967 (4 folders) Dissertation Draft, 1967-1968 (2 folders) Working papers 1967 (1 folder)
BOX 2	1968, undated (4 folders) Library projects, 1967-1968, undated Miscellany, 1967 De Sablá family Aug. Salomon & Cie, 1841-1853 Canal proposals, 1880-1884, 1895 Certificates of birth, marriage, and death, 1804-1914 Chauffeur's license, 1912 Compagnie universelle du canal interocéanique, sales of company stock, 1881
BOX 3	Consul of Ecuador at Panama, 1861-1864 Correspondence Bound 1837-1844, 1869-1876 (4 folders)
BOX 4	1882-1887 (2 folders) Unbound, 1837-1912 (6 folders) Estate papers, 1865-1929, undated
BOX 5	Financial material, 1856, 1869, 1901, 1913, 1926-1929, undated Mining, 1868, undated Miranda, Pedro David, partnerships with Teodoro Joly de Sablá, 1877, 1884 Mortgage Guadeloupe, 1846

Engleheart to Moore, 1814 *See Oversize*
Panama Water Works, 1882-1884
Power of attorney, 1873-1874, 1912-1920
Printed matter, 1863-1871, 1880-1890, undated *See also Oversize*
Property
 Lists, 1876, 1905 *See Oversize*
 Miscellany, 1842, 1850-1876, 1916, undated
 Tax records, 1854-1856
 Taxes and miscellany packet, 1839-1868, 1904-1910, undated
 Titles packet
 Part 1, 1840-1868
 Part 2, 1869-1899, undated
 Transactions, 1850-1856, 1872, 1910-1912, undated
 Proposal for forming a commercial and banking company in Panama, 1850
 Quintana, Martín, Río Congo, 1862-1866, undated
 Railroad and canal proposals, 1847-1848, undated
 Telegraph, 1867-1868, 1880

BOX 6

United States ex rel de Sablá v. Panama
 Affidavits
 Bound
 De Sablá, Theodore J., Jr., with exhibits, 1932
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 General, 1932
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 Unbound, 1931-1932
 Boundaries of Bernardino and Aguacate, circa 1814, undated
 Briefs
 Answer of Panama, 1932
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 Reply of Panama, 1933
 Cervera v. Canavaggio, 1919

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 Forest resources of Panama, 1931
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 Occupants of Bernardino and collective table, 1878, 1912-1932, undated *See also Oversize*
 Maps, 1931, undated
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Personal Papers, 1804-1977

Container

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	Memorial of the United States, 1932 (2 folders)
BOX 8	(4 folders) Miscellaneous land sales and <i>edictos</i> , circa 1910-1920 Notes, 1924-1925 Panamanian land laws, decrees, resolutions, etc. Miscellany, 1931 References to brief of the United States, circa 1931 Volume 1, circa 1931 (4 folders) Volume 2, circa 1931 (3 folders)
BOX 9	(1 folder) Photographs, undated Press, 1932-1936 Printed record of court proceedings, 1934 Property Deeds for Bernardino, 1822, undated (2 folders) Miscellany, 1920-1937, undated Summary of facts, draft, undated Taxes, 1905-1908, 1931 Venado Plantation Co. claim before the Joint Land Commission, circa 1915 Lindsay, Courtenay Correspondence 1907-1909 (3 folders)
BOX 10	1910-1920 (3 folders) Record of correspondence, 1907-1920 Matthews, Mrs. Jackson, family history, 1976-1977 Moore, Alice D., memoir, undated O'Connor, Christopher, copy of 1810-1819 shipmaster's book, undated <i>See Oversize</i> Richards, Arthur Miscellany, 1964 "Retrospect of the Panama Canal: My Five Years in the Canal Zone," 1964 Rose, Frank, memoir, undated
BOX 11	Sidell, William Henry, diary, 1849 (2 folders) <i>Available on microfilm. Shelf no. 12,191</i> Stevens, John Frank, "A Momentous Hour at Panama," 1930 Whitehead, Richard, 1943, 1954, undated Wilson, Charles Autobiography, 1933-1934 Letters about Wilson, 1945 Logbooks, 1908-1935, undated (2 folders)

Personal Papers, 1804-1977

Container

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Correspondence, 1912-1959, undated
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(2 folders)
Newspaper clippings, 1917-1962, undated
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BOX 12-32

Organizations File, 1849-1976

Correspondence, minutes of meetings, financial material, contracts, printed matter, advertisements, canal plans, technical drawings and reports, posters, newspaper clippings, menus, scrapbooks, photographs, and ephemera.
Arranged alphabetically by type or name of club, business, institution, or organization.
Containers 14-21 have been microfilmed, but the film consists of a negative copy and is not available for reader use. Shelf no. 20, 869-7N.

BOX 12 not filmed

Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks, 1925

Boyd Brothers Steamship Agencies, 1959

Canal Zone Baseball League

Constitutions, bylaws, and related material, 1940-1947, undated

Correspondence, 1943-1949, undated

(5 folders)

Financial material, 1943-1950, undated

(4 folders)

Minutes, 1943-1950

(2 folders)

BOX 13

Miscellany, 1910, 1940-1949, undated

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Notices of meetings, 1944-1948

Press releases, 1944-1949, undated

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Century Club, 1925

Churches, 1943, 1964-1969, undated

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Organizations File, 1849-1976

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- Property documents and titles from 1881-1889, English translation, 1905
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 - Profiles
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 - Coudert Bros., transfer of French Canal Co., 1899-1902, 1967
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 - Ancon, essay by Mary Eugenia Hibbard, 1904
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 - Palo Seco, 1967, undated
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 - Menus
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 - The Incas
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 - Geographical reports, 1958-1963
 - Membership lists, 1958-1965
 - Minutes and reports, 1954-1967
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- BOX 27** Knights of Pythias
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 - Correspondence and certificates, 1910-1919, undated
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Organizations File, 1849-1976

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Organizations File, 1849-1976

Container

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BOX 32-35

Miscellaneous Manuscripts, 1806-1976

Correspondence, printed matter, autograph collections, bibliographies, mementos, ephemera, writings, photographs, passports, and congressional testimony.
Arranged alphabetically by topic, name of person, or type of material.

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Baxter, John Kirkman, *Goulash and Caviar*, 1925
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Bingaman, John R., correspondence re swimming canal, 1914
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Miscellaneous Manuscripts, 1806-1976

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 Grier, Charles, mementos, 1909-1913, 1972, undated
 Holiday celebrations, 1908-1913, 1960
 Hunsecker, F. S., Taca-Arica Plebiscitary Commission, 1926
 Interstate and Foreign Commerce Committee Testimony, United States House of Representatives, 1909
 Bishop, Joseph Bucklin
 Cooke, Col. Tom M.
 Devol, Maj. C. A.
 Gaillard, Maj. D. D.
 Goethals, Col. George W.
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 Harding, Maj. Chester
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 Labor (canal workers), 1964, 1970, undated
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 Lesseps, Ferdinand de, letter, 1866
 Lupfer, C. M., correspondence, 1964
 Magoon, Charles E., letter, 1906
 Marks, David, commission and passport, 1913-1914 [*See Oversize*](#)
 Mohl, Charles, passport, 1921
 Moore, Amanda, *Around the Years in Panama*, 1926
 Musical concerts and lectures, 1906-1913, 1941-1953, 1963-1972, undated
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 Navy bill, 1892
 Núñez, Ramos Rafael, death of, 1894 [*See Oversize*](#)
 Owens, John, mementos, 1910-1914, 1966
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 Payne, Harry Moore, mementos, 1905-1910, undated
 Poem, "Tropical Tramp," undated
 "Rapport de la Mission Chargée D'Étudier les Conséquences de L'Ouverture du Canal de Panama . . .," 1913
 Robertson, Thornton K., mementos, 1905, 1913, 1924, 1966

Miscellaneous Manuscripts, 1806-1976

Container

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Russell, Anna B., letter, 1951
Sachs, Joseph (UPW-CIO), speech, 1948
Searles, Joseph, correspondence to Gaillard & Wright, 1912
Selfridge, T. O., correspondence, 1870?, undated
Sheet music, 1945, 1959, undated
Social events, 1908, 1917, 1945, 1954-1970, undated
Stamp News, 1916
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Totten, G. M., bill for lumber, 1842
Unidentified letter, "Frances" to "Irene," with cover letter, 1913, 1971
United Nations Security Council meeting in Panama, 1973
United States military, 1955, 1971, undated
Wang, F. H., letter to Eugene C. Stevens, 1943
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BOX 36-38

Booklets, circa 1900-1976

Booklets concerning legislative and legal matters in the Republic of Panama and the Canal Zone.

Arranged in alphabetical groupings by Container and preceded by an index comprised of photocopied title pages.

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BOX OV 1-OV 18

Oversize, 1814-1970

Oversize real estate documents, printed matter, books, posters, technical papers, financial material, and scrapbooks.

Organized and described according to the series, folders, and containers from which the items were removed.

BOX OV 1

Personal Papers

De Sablá family

Mortgage

Engleheart to Moore, 1814 (Container 5)

Printed matter, 1863-1887 ([Container 5](#))

Property

Lists, 1876, 1905 (Container 5)

United States ex rel de Sablá v. Panama

Lists

Occupants of Bernardino and collective table, undated ([Container 7](#))

BOX OV 2

O'Connor, Christopher, copy of 1810-1819 shipmaster's book, undated (Container 10)

Organizations File

Compagnie nouvelle du canal de Panama

Oversize, 1814-1970

Container

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	Blanchet, 1881 (Container 21)
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