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.
Lesseps, Ferdinand de, 1805-1894.

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The status of copyright in the unpublished writings in the Panama Collection of the Canal Zone Library-Museum is governed by the Copyright Law of the United States (Title 17, U.S.C.).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

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Container</th>
<th>Series</th>
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</table>
| 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 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 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.  |
| 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.  |
| 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.  |
## Container List

**Container** | **Contents**
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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

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   Dissertation  
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BOX 4 | 1882-1887  
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<td><strong>Miscellaneous land sales and edictos, circa 1910-1920</strong>&lt;br&gt;(4 folders)</td>
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<td><strong>Photographs, undated</strong>&lt;br&gt;Press, 1932-1936</td>
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<td><strong>Printed record of court proceedings, 1934</strong>&lt;br&gt;Property</td>
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<td><strong>Deeds for Bernardino, 1822, undated</strong>&lt;br&gt;(2 folders)</td>
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<td><strong>Miscellany, 1920-1937, undated</strong>&lt;br&gt;Summary of facts, draft, undated</td>
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<td><strong>Taxes, 1905-1908, 1931</strong>&lt;br&gt;Venado Plantation Co. claim before the Joint Land Commission, circa 1915</td>
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<td><strong>Lindsay, Courtenay</strong>&lt;br&gt;Correspondence</td>
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<td><strong>1907-1909</strong>&lt;br&gt;(3 folders)</td>
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<td><strong>Matthews, Mrs. Jackson, family history, 1976-1977</strong>&lt;br&gt;Moore, Alice D., memoir, undated&lt;br&gt;O'Connor, Christopher, copy of 1810-1819 shipmaster's book, undated See Oversize&lt;br&gt;Richards, Arthur</td>
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<td><strong>Miscellany, 1964</strong>&lt;br&gt;&quot;Retrospect of the Panama Canal: My Five Years in the Canal Zone,&quot; 1964&lt;br&gt;Rose, Frank, memo, undated</td>
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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. |
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<td>Humphreys, J., proprietor of the Colon Telegram, 1889-1890</td>
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<td>&quot;Notice to the Jamaican Labourers,&quot; 1898 See Oversize</td>
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<td>Numbers and types of workers, 1894</td>
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<td>Recruiting Jamaicans, 1896-1899, undated</td>
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<td>To the chef du domaine, 1883</td>
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<td>To the director, 1894</td>
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<td>Extension of canal construction rights, 1890</td>
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<td>Panama Canal Club of Southern California, circa 1938</td>
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<td>Panama Railroad Co.</td>
<td>Commissary Department, 1909-1910</td>
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<td>Contracts, 1851-1956, 1867, 1881</td>
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<td>Labor, 1918</td>
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<td>Mementos, 1906-1909, 1957</td>
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<td>Minutes of Executive and Finance Committee, 1904-1906</td>
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<td>Passes and tickets, 1890-1893, 1906-1914, 1949, 1962</td>
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<td>Report, 1884</td>
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<td>Stocks and bonds, 1870-1897</td>
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<td>Timetable and train rules, 1871, 1961, undated</td>
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<td>BOX 32</td>
<td>Panama Shriners Club, 1912</td>
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<td>Society of the Chagres</td>
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</table>
Annual reunion material, 1915-1916  
Membership pin and related material, undated  
Photographs, 1931-1933  
Strangers Club, 1907  
Teatro Nacional, 1940-1943, undated See also Oversize  
Tivoli Club  
Menu, undated See Oversize  
Miscellany, 1912, undated  
West India & Pacific Steam-Ship Co., 1898

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.

BOX 32  
Anniversary celebrations, 1939, 1944, 1952, 1958-1965, 1976 See also Oversize  
(2 folders)  
Aspinwall, [James S.], letter, 1862  
Aspinwall, William H., correspondence, 1849, 1947  
Autograph and postage stamp collection, 1906, undated See Oversize  
Autographs, 1889-1951  
Bank ledger, 1849-1862 See Oversize  
Bates, Lindon W., letter, 1905  
Bath mosquito trap, 1912, 1960, undated See Oversize  
Baxter, John Kirkman, *Goulash and Caviar*, 1925  
Beau, M., letter re French canal, 1889  
Bibliographies, 1926-1927, 1935-1977, undated  
(4 folders)  
Bingaman, John R., correspondence re swimming canal, 1914  
Boating safety, undated  
Bridges, 1930, 1961  
Bullfight poster, 1909  
Canal proposal of 1826 by Aaron H. Palmer, copy, undated See Oversize  
Certificates  
Colon International Exposition, 1954 See Oversize  
Chanteys and work songs of canal construction workers, 1939 
Chauffeurs' licenses, 1914-1915  
Civilian defense, 1943  
Clandestine publications  
*El Grito*, 1969, 1974  
(2 folders)  
Miscellany, 1968-1969, undated  
Commissary coupon books, circa 1915  
Corey, Mrs. Frank L., letter re William Joseph, 1964  
Dances, 1912-1915, 1940-1945, 1958, undated
Ehrman family contracts re Hotel Central of Panama City, and miscellany, 1806, 1844,
1853-1857, 1867-1880, 1883-1894, 1916
(3 folders)
Eisenhower, Dwight D., correspondence, 1922, 1954
Gasoline/diesel oil purchase card, 1964
Goethals, George W.
  Correspondence, 1914-1916, 1974
BOX 34
  Memorial volume, 1928
"Gorgas and Goethals at Panama," play by Samuel S. Ullman, 1939
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.
  Gudger, H. A.
  Harding, Maj. Chester
  Hodges, Lt.-Col. H. F.
  Rousseau, H. H.
  Sibert, Maj.
  Wilson, Maj. Eugene T.
BOX 35
Irwin, Ralph B., letter, undated
Labor (canal workers), 1964, 1970, undated
"Last Saturday's Launching," *Fore and Aft*, 1919
Latchford, Stephen, diary excerpt from 16 March 1907, undated
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
  (2 folders)
Navy bill, 1892
Núñez, Ramos Rafael, death of, 1894 See Oversize
Owens, John, mementos, 1910-1914, 1966
*Panama Mail*, 1905
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
Roosevelt, Franklin D., letter to Leopoldo Arosemena, 1940
Roosevelt, Theodore, miscellany, 1904-1906, 1959
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
*Stamp News*, 1916
(2 folders)
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
War savings bonds, 1942-1944, undated

**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.

**BOX 36**

Index
A-G

**BOX 37**

H-L

**BOX 38**

L-Z

**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
Canal plans
- Report of the Technical Committee, 1899 (Container 19)

BOX OV 3
- Inventory, 1898 (Container 19)

BOX OV 4
- Labor
- "Notice to the Jamaican Labourers," 1898 (Container 19)

BOX OV 5
- Compagnie universelle du canal interocéanique
  - Financial material, 1888 (Container 20)
  - Personnel
    - Garner, Donald James, 1886-1893 (Container 21)

Technical papers
- Borings
  - Blanchet, 1881 (Container 21)
  - Culebra, 1886 (Container 21)
  - Emperador, 1881-1884 (Container 21)

Borings and geological profiles of test pits in Culebra cut Miscellaneous, 1889-1890 (Container 21)

BOX OV 6
- Geological profile along Culebra to Paraíso
  - Part I, 1882 (Container 21)

BOX OV 7
- Part II, 1882 (Container 21)

BOX OV 8
- Test pits and boring on Culebra valley, 1889-1890 (Container 21)

BOX OV 9
- Hotel Washington, Colon Register, 1913 (Container 23)

BOX OV 10
- Isthmian Canal Commission
  - Financial material, 1902-1906
    - Vol. I (Container 24)
    - Vol. II (Container 24)

BOX OV 11
- Vol. III (Container 24)

BOX OV 12
- Organizations File
  - Isthmian Canal Commission
    - Financial material, 1902-1906
      - Vol. III (Container 24)

BOX OV 13
- Isthmian Historical Society
  - Scrapbooks
    - Vols. 1-4, 1954-1964 (Container 26)
    - Vols. 5-7, 1958-1967 (Container 26)

BOX OV 14
- Teatro Nacional, undated (Container 32)
  - Tivoli club
    - Menu, undated (Container 32)

Miscellaneous Manuscripts
- Anniversary celebrations, 1964 (Container 32)
- Autograph and postage stamp collection, 1906, undated (Container 32)

BOX OV 16
- Bank ledger, 1849-1862 (Container 32)

BOX OV 17
- Bath mosquito trap, 1912, 1960, undated (Container 32)
- Canal proposal of 1826 by Aaron H. Palmer, copy, undated (Container 33)
- Certificates
  - Colon International Exposition, 1954 (Container 33)
## Oversize, 1814-1970

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<tr>
<th>Container</th>
<th>Contents</th>
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<tr>
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<td>Marks, David, commission and passport, 1913-1914 (Container 35)</td>
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<td>Núñez, Ramos Rafael, death of, 1894 (Container 35)</td>
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