Canal Zone Library-Museum

A Register of Its Panama Collection in the Library of Congress

Prepared by Karen Linn Femia with the assistance of Kathleen Kelly and Scott McLemee

Manuscript Division, Library of Congress

Washington, D.C.

2006

Contact information: http://lcweb.loc.gov/rr/mss/address.html

Finding aid encoded by Library of Congress Manuscript Division, 2006

Finding aid URL: http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.mss/eadmss.ms006036
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
Repository: Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.
Abstract: 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.

Names:
- Canal Zone Library-Museum
- Eisenhower, Dwight D. (Dwight David), 1890-1969
- Lesseps, Ferdinand de, 1805-1894
- De Sablá family
- De Sablá family--Trials, litigation, etc.
- Canal Zone Baseball League
- 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
- Sidell, William Henry, 1810-1873. Papers of William Henry Sidell (1849)

Subjects:
- Canals--Panama
- Canal Zone--History
- Canal Zone--Social life and customs
- Panama--Commerce
- Panama--History
- Panama Canal (Panama)

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.).

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, n.d.**
- **Organizations File, 1849-1976, n.d.**
- **Miscellaneous Manuscripts, 1806-1976, n.d.**
- **Booklets, ca. 1900-1976**
- **Oversize, 1814-1970, n.d.**
**Description of Series**

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<th>Container</th>
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<td>BOX 1-11</td>
<td><strong>Personal Papers, 1804-1977, n.d.</strong></td>
<td>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</td>
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<td>BOX 12-32</td>
<td><strong>Organizations File, 1849-1976, n.d.</strong></td>
<td>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.</td>
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<td>BOX 32-35</td>
<td><strong>Miscellaneous Manuscripts, 1806-1976, n.d.</strong></td>
<td>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.</td>
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<td>BOX 36-38</td>
<td><strong>Booklets, ca. 1900-1976</strong></td>
<td>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.</td>
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<td>BOX OV 1-OV 18</td>
<td><strong>Oversize, 1814-1970, n.d.</strong></td>
<td>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.</td>
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## Container List

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| BOX 1-11  | **Personal Papers, 1804-1977, n.d.**  
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  
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Crystal, Thomas  
   Bibliographies, 1967-1968  
   Book draft, 1967  
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   Draft, 1967-1968  
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   Working papers  
   1967  
   (1 folder) |
| BOX 2     | 1968, n.d.  
   (4 folders)  
   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)  
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   (6 folders)  
   Estate papers, 1865-1929, n.d. |
| BOX 5     | Financial material, 1856, 1869, 1901, 1913, 1926-1929, n.d.  
   Mining, 1868, n.d.  
   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
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Lists, 1876, 1905. See Oversize
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Proposal for forming a commercial and banking company in Panama, 1850
Quintana, Martin, Rio Congo, 1862-1866, n.d.
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  General, 1932
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Boundaries of Bernardino and Aguacate, ca. 1814, n.d.
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  Answer of Panama, 1932
  Of the United States, 1933
    (5 folders)
  Reply of Panama, 1933
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Miscellany, 1931
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Deeds for Bernardino, 1822, n.d.
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Summary of facts, draft, n.d.
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Venado Plantation Co. claim before the Joint Land Commission, ca. 1915
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Record of correspondence, 1907-1920
Matthews, Mrs. Jackson, family history, 1976-1977
Moore, Alice D., memoir, n.d.
Richards, Arthur
Miscellany, 1964
"Retrospect of the Panama Canal: My Five Years in the Canal Zone," 1964
Rose, Frank, memoir, n.d.

Sidell, William Henry, diary, 1849
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Available on microfilm. Shelf no. 12,191
Stevens, John Frank, "A Momentous Hour at Panama," 1930
Wilson, Charles
Autobiography, 1933-1934
Letters about Wilson, 1945
Logbooks, 1908-1935, n.d.
(2 folders)
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<th>Container</th>
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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. |
| BOX 12 | Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks, 1925
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ORGANIZATIONS FILE, 1849-1976, N.D.

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   Colon, first chart, 1907
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   Accounting system devised by Public Accountants Corp., 1905
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   Circular of information, 1906
   Financial material, 1902-1906  See Oversize
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   Notice to employees regarding transportation, n.d.
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   Chart, tentative, 1912
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  Engineering memorandum, 1905
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<td>Natural History Society</td>
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<td>Financial material</td>
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<td>Unbound, 1931-1943, 1953-1961</td>
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<td>Miscellany, 1932, 1940-1944, 1951, n.d.</td>
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<td>BOX 31</td>
<td>Notices of meetings, 1932-1962</td>
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<td>Promotional materials, 1931, n.d.</td>
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<td>Old Timers, 1928, 1962</td>
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<td>Panama Canal Club of Southern California, ca. 1938</td>
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<td>Commissary Department, 1909-1910</td>
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<td>Contracts, 1851-1956, 1867, 1881</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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Teatro Nacional, 1940-1943, n.d.  *See also Oversize*
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**BOX 32-35**

**Miscellaneous Manuscripts, 1806-1976, n.d.**
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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Bath mosquito trap, 1912, 1960, n.d.  *See Oversize*
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Beau, M., letter re French canal, 1889
   (4 folders)
Bingaman, John R., correspondence re swimming canal, 1914
Boating safety, n.d.
Bridges, 1930, 1961
Bullfight poster, 1909
Canal proposal of 1826 by Aaron H. Palmer, copy, n.d.  *See Oversize*
Certificates
   Colon International Exposition, 1954  *See Oversize*
Chanteys and work songs of canal construction workers, 1939
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Civilian defense, 1943
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   *El Grito*, 1969, 1974
   (2 folders)
Commissary coupon books, ca. 1915
Corey, Mrs. Frank L., letter re William Joseph, 1964
### Miscellaneous Manuscripts, 1806-1976, n.d.

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  - Correspondence, 1914-1916, 1974  
  - Memorial volume, 1928  
"Gorgas and Goethals at Panama," play by Samuel S. Ullman, 1939  
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.  
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| **BOX 35** | Irwin, Ralph B., letter, n.d.  
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Lupfer, C. M., correspondence, 1964  
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Mohl, Charles, passport, 1921  
Moore, Amanda, *Around the Years in Panama*, 1926  
  - See Oversize (2 folders)  
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Núñez, Ramos Rafael, death of, 1894  
  - See Oversize  
Owens, John, mementos, 1910-1914, 1966  
*Panama Mail*, 1905  
Payne, Harry Moore, mementos, 1905-1910, n.d.  
"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 |
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<td>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.</td>
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<td>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.</td>
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<td>De Sablá family</td>
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