Nicaragua Canal Construction Company Records

A Finding Aid to the Collection in the Library of Congress

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Manuscript Division, Library of Congress

Washington, D.C.

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Contact information: http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.mss/mss.contact

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Collection Summary

Title: Nicaragua Canal Construction Company Records
Span Dates: 1887-1913
Bulk Dates: (bulk 1887-1888)
ID No.: MSS34660
Creator: Nicaragua Canal Construction Company
Extent: 140 items ; 7 containers ; 2.8 linear feet
Language: Collection material in English
Repository: Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.
Abstract: A corporate enterprise formed to build the first trans-Isthmian canal across Central America. Chiefly survey notebooks concerning the nature, depth, and suitability of the rivers and waterways of Nicaragua for purposes of a canal. Also includes issues of the *Canal Record*, an American newspaper published in the Panama 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.

Organizations
Canal Zone.
Nicaragua Canal Construction Company.

Subjects
Canals--Central America.
Rivers--Nicaragua.
Waterways--Nicaragua.

Places
Nicaragua--Surveys.
Panama Canal (Panama)--Periodicals.

Titles
Canal record.

Administrative Information

Provenance

The records of the Nicaragua Canal Construction Company were acquired by the Library of Congress in 1944 via an exchange with Dartmouth College, Hanover, N.H., and by gift of the Chase Safe Deposit Company of New York, N.Y., in 1951.

Processing History

The collection was housed circa 1951. The finding aid was created in 2000 and revised in 2012.

Transfers

Fifteen maps have been transferred to the Library's Geography and Map Division where they are identified as part of these records.

Copyright Status

The status of copyright in the unpublished writings of the Nicaragua Canal Construction Company is governed by the Copyright Law of the United States (Title 17, U.S.C.).

Access and Restrictions

The records of the Nicaragua Canal Construction Comapny are 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.

Preferred Citation

Researchers wishing to cite this collection should include the following information: Container number, Nicaragua Canal Construction Company Records, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Scope and Content Note

The records of the Nicaragua Canal Construction Company span the years 1887-1913, with the bulk of the material dated 1887-1888. The company, a commercial, non-governmental enterprise, was formed in 1886 with the intention of constructing a trans-Isthmian canal across Central America. Hydrographic and topographic survey teams were organized and dispatched to Nicaragua, where they investigated the routes of waterways, charted depths, and measured tidal influences. These records consist primarily of survey notes taken during these expeditions. The notebooks detail the teams' findings concerning the rivers Brito, Colorado, Deseado, Indio, Las Lajas, San Carlos, San Francisco, San Juanillo, and Tauro. Soundings were also taken at Greytown and the Tamborcito basin.

Geographic place names have changed since the 1880s and several of the place names used by the survey teams to label their notebooks are no longer used. This finding aid lists the place names as used by the survey teams, not their modern equivalents. Greytown is now San Juan del Norte. The Tamborcito basin is now the Isla de la California. The rivers, or rios, Deseado, San Juanillo and San Francisco are now called creeks, or caños; the Deseado is now El Deseado. The Rio Tauro listed by the survey teams may refer to the modern Rio de la Tawa (also called Tagua); the river or area labeled "Ochoa" is unknown. *

These records also include issues of the *Canal Record*, a newspaper published by the American administration of the Panama Canal Zone, for 1911-1913. There appears to be no connection between the *Canal Record* and the proposed Nicaragua canal or Nicaragua Canal Construction Company.

*Information concerning place names is taken from the findings of the United States Board on Geographic Names as published in the *Gazetteer of Nicaragua* (Washington: Defense Mapping Agency, 1985).

Arrangement of the Papers

This collection is arranged by type of material and geographic location.

Container List

Container	*Contents*
BOX 1	Hydrographic survey expedition, 1888
BOX 1	Soundings
BOX 1	Brito Bay
BOX 1	Greytown
	(7 notebooks)
BOX 1	Las Lajas
	(2 notebooks)
BOX 1	Las Lajas and San Carlos
BOX 1	San Carlos
	(3 notebooks)
BOX 2	Tides
BOX 2	Brito Bay
BOX 2	Greytown
	(5 notebooks)
BOX 2	Las Lajas
	(2 notebooks)
BOX 2	San Carlos, Las Lajas, and Brito Bay
BOX 2	Levels, Brito Bay, San Carlos, Las Lajas
	(2 notebooks)
BOX 2	Meter work, Greytown and vicinity
	(2 notebooks)
BOX 2	Transit and level notes, Rio Indio and harbor head
	(2 notebooks)
BOX 2	Specimens of bottom, Greytown harbor lagoon
BOX 2	Survey notes
BOX 2	Second beach traverse at Greytown
BOX 2	Signals at Greytown
BOX 2	Transit book re Rio Indio, Rio Tauro, Rio Colorado
BOX 2	Gradienter work
BOX 2	Rio San Juan
BOX 2	Levels at Greytown
	(2 notebooks)
BOX 3	Survey expedition, 1887-1888
BOX 3	Deseado-Rio San Juanillo section
	(11 notebooks)
BOX 3	Ochoa section
	(7 notebooks)
BOX 4	Rio de la San Francisco section
	(8 notebooks)
BOX 5	Rio de la San Francisco and Tamborcito Basin section
	(12 notebooks)

Container	*Contents*
BOX 6	Western Division section (20 notebooks)
BOX 7	*Canal Record,* Ancon, Panama Canal Zone, 1911-1913
BOX 7	Orders to camp employees, 1889