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Guide to the Nicaragua Canal Company Records

GEN MSS 1774



by Brooke McManus

December 2021

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Collection Overview

REPOSITORY: Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library
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CALL NUMBER: GEN MSS 1774

CREATOR: Nicaragua Canal Company

TITLE: Nicaragua Canal Company records

DATES: circa 1860s-1902

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION: 0.96 linear feet (3 boxes)

LANGUAGE: In English, with a small amount of material in Spanish.

SUMMARY: The collection consists of correspondence, financial and legal papers, clippings, and other documents relating to the Nicaragua Canal Company. Included are original charters and agreements with the Nicaraguan government to build a canal, as well as financial statements, partnership agreements between American investors, and lists of stockholders in the Nicaragua Canal Construction Company, such as former United States Vice President Levi P. Morton and a number of senators. In addition, the collection contains correspondence and documents concerning the failure of the project, shareholder lawsuits, allegations the Nicaragua Canal Construction Company mismanaged funds, and disputes between shareholder factions over a plan to reorganize the company.

ONLINE FINDING AID: To cite or bookmark this finding aid, please use the following link: <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/beinecke.nicaraguacanal>

Requesting Instructions

To request items from this collection for use in the Beinecke Library reading room, please use the request links in the HTML version of this finding aid, available at <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/beinecke.nicaraguacanal>.

To order reproductions from this collection, please send an email with the call number, box number(s), and folder number(s) to beinecke.images@yale.edu.

Key to the container abbreviations used in the PDF finding aid:

b. box
f. folder

Administrative Information

Immediate Source of Acquisition

Purchased from Waiting for Godot Books on the Walter Jennings Memorial Fund, 2012.

Conditions Governing Access

This collection is open for research

Conditions Governing Use

The Nicaragua Canal Company Records is the physical property of the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University. Literary rights, including copyright, belong to the authors or their legal heirs and assigns. For further information, consult the appropriate curator.

Preferred Citation

Nicaragua Canal Company Records. General Collection, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University.

Processing Information

Collections are processed to a variety of levels, depending on the work necessary to make them usable, their perceived research value, the availability of staff, competing priorities, and whether or not further accruals are expected. The library attempts to provide a basic level of preservation and access for all collections, and does more extensive processing of higher priority collections as time and resources permit.

This collection received a basic level of processing, including rehousing and minimal organization.

Information included in the Description of Papers note and Collection Contents section is drawn from information supplied with the collection and from an initial survey of the contents. Folder titles appearing in the contents list below are often based on those provided by the creator or previous custodian. Titles have not been verified against the contents of the folders in all cases. Otherwise, folder titles are supplied by staff during initial processing.

This finding aid may be updated periodically to account for new acquisitions to the collection and/or revisions in arrangement and description.

Separated Materials

Printed material received with the collection was removed for separate cataloging and can be accessed by searching the library's online catalog.

Nicaragua Canal Company

The Nicaragua Canal Company, also known as the Maritime Canal Company of Nicaragua, was chartered by the United States Congress in 1889 to build a transisthmian canal across Nicaragua. The company assumed control from the Nicaragua Canal Association, which had been assigned to the project in 1887. The Nicaragua Canal Construction Company, organized by an act of Congress incorporating the Maritime

Canal Company, was tasked with developing local infrastructure for the project and building the canal. Construction began in 1890, and by 1892 the company had completed the final surveys and maps and built a project headquarters at the proposed canal entry at Greytown, Nicaragua, including barracks, a hospital, and warehouses and machine shops. The company also laid down eleven miles of railway tracks, dredged one mile of canal, and cleared 5,000 acres of forest. Amid financing issues and allegations by stockholders that the Nicaragua Canal Construction Company mismanaged funds, the project was suspended in 1893.

Scope and Contents

The collection consists of correspondence, financial and legal papers, clippings, and other documents relating to the Nicaragua Canal Company. Included are original charters and agreements with the Nicaraguan government to build a canal, as well as financial statements, partnership agreements between American investors, and lists of stockholders in the Nicaragua Canal Construction Company, such as former United States Vice President Levi P. Morton and a number of senators. In addition, the collection contains correspondence and documents concerning the failure of the project, shareholder lawsuits, allegations the Nicaragua Canal Construction Company mismanaged funds, and disputes between shareholder factions over a plan to reorganize the company.

Arrangement

Materials maintain order found at time of acquisition.

Collection Contents

Materials Concerning the History of a Nicaraguan Canal

b. 1, f. 1	Hatch, Frederick H. Letter from the Committee in Opposition to the Bartlett Plan of Reorganization	1884
b. 1, f. 2	Stevens, C. Amory. Letter to John Barker, Morton Bliss & Co.	circa 1890s
b. 1, f. 3	Humphreys, Solon. Letter to J. C. Gardener	1889
b. 1, f. 4	The Chamber of Commerce of San Francisco memorial regarding Nicaraguan canal construction	1894
b. 1, f. 5	Opinions of Messrs. Lourey [Lowry] and Porter	1871
b. 3 (Oversize), f. 60	Cuadro de distancias comprendidas entre Barranquilla y Caracoli	circa 1860s-1880s
b. 1, f. 6	Ship - Canal (via Nicaragua) uniting the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans: copy, proposed charter	circa 1870
b. 1, f. 7	Revised manuscript for "proposed charter"	circa 1870
b. 1, f. 8	Second revised typed manuscript of a charter	circa 1870
b. 1, f. 9	Morris, Francis. Letter to Nicaraguan President Pedro Joaquín Chamorro Alfaro	1877
b. 1, f. 10	Cox, James. Translation, extract from the Gacete Oficial dated Managua Thursday 20th March 1879	circa 1879
b. 1, f. 11	Newspaper clippings about the Panama Canal and proposed Nicaragua Canal	1879-1880

Legal Documents and Correspondence

b. 1, f. 12	Draft agreement between Charles H. Stebbins, Philip Tabb, James O'Shaughnessy and Edward R. Johnes TO form a syndicate for the purposed of investigating the Nicaragua Canal project	1887
b. 1, f. 13	Agreement between Charles H. Stebbins, Philip Tabb, James O'Shaughnessy, Edward R. Johnes, and Robert Bryce, typescript	1887
b. 1, f. 14	Agreement between Charles H. Stebbins, Philip Tabb, James O'Shaughnessy, Robert Bryce, and Edward R. Johnes, autograph manuscript	1887
b. 1, f. 15	Draft agreement, exhibit A	1887
b. 1, f. 16	Agreement and proposed settlement between A. L. Blackman and Charles H. Stebbins	1887
b. 1, f. 17	Copy of agreement between Francis A. Stout, Horace L. Hotchkiss, James P. O'Shaughnessy, and Charles H. Stebbins regarding shares of Nicaragua Canal Association Related to shares in the Nicaragua Canal Association	1887

b. 1, f. 18	Stebbins, Minnie V. Copy of a letter to President Grover Cleveland	1887
b. 1, f. 19	Philip Tabb and Charles H. Stebbins letter and agreement	1887
b. 1, f. 20	Unsigned testimony related to Francis C. Morris and Nicaragua Canal rights	circa 1889
b. 1, f. 21	Agreement between Frances M. Delprat and Philip Tabb related to the estate of Francis C. Morris	1889
b. 1, f. 22	Edward R. Johnes deposition	1889
b. 1, f. 23	Signed agreement, copy release between Philip Tabb and John C. F. Gardener	1888
b. 1, f. 24	Statement of facts regarding the position of Philip Tabb of Gloucester, Va., and Charles H. Stebbins of New York	1887
b. 1, f. 25	Copy order of discontinuance and consent, Philip Tabb against James O'Shaughnessy and the Nicaragua Canal Construction Company	1888
b. 1, f. 26	Agreement between E. R. Johnes, Philip Tabb, and Charles H. Stebbins	1887
b. 1, f. 27	Daly, Hoyt & Mason. Letter to John C. F. Gardner	1888
b. 1, f. 28	Draft of a letter to James O'Shaughnessy concerning Tabb lawsuit	circa 1887
b. 1, f. 29	Agreement of extension between Philip Tabb versus Charles H. Stebbins	1889
b. 1, f. 30-31	Notes, drafts of letters, and other papers	circa 1880s
Materials Related to Finances and Expenditures of the Nicaragua Canal Co.		
b. 2, f. 32	Nicaragua Canal Construction Company financial statements	circa 1891-1893
b. 2, f. 33	Reasons for desiring to see the books of the Nicaragua Canal Construction Co.	circa 1891
b. 2, f. 34	Atkins, Thomas B. Letters to John C. F. Gardner	1894
b. 2, f. 35	Waud & Edwards. Receipt to John C. F. Gardner	1894
b. 2, f. 36	Miller, J. W. Letter to John C.F. Gardner	1894
1894 Stockholder Documents and Lists		
b. 2, f. 37	List of stockholders, Nicaragua Canal Co.	1894
b. 2, f. 38	Stockholders Nic. Canal Cons. Co.	1891
b. 2, f. 39	Stockholders and principal stockholders, including U.S. senators and congressman Republican politicians including former Vice President Levi P. Morton, Senators James Graham Fair and William Pierce Frye, and Representative Bellamy Storer.	circa 1894
1894 Correspondence and Documents Concerning Bartlett Plan of Reorganization		
b. 2, f. 40	Gardner, John C. F. Letters from Thomas B. Atkins, John R. Bartlett	1894
b. 2, f. 41	Telegrams, resolutions, receipts, and other papers	1894-1902

b. 2, f. 42	Bradford, Gamaliel. Letter to the editor, <i>New York Times</i>	1894
b. 2, f. 43	Downing, Wellington. Letters to Frederick H. Hatch and John C. F. Gardner	1894
b. 2, f. 44	Gardner, John C. F. Receipts to Committee of Stockholders of the Nicaragua Canal Construction Company	1894
b. 2, f. 45	Gardner, John C. F. Letters from various Nicaragua Canal Construction Company stockholders	1894
b. 2, f. 46	Hatch, Frederick H. Letters to John C. F. Gardner and unidentified recipients	1894
b. 2, f. 47-48	Hatch, Frederick H. Letters from various Nicaragua Canal Construction Company stockholders	1893-1894
b. 2, f. 49	Mason, Alexander. Letters to John Bartlett and John C. F. Gardner	1894
b. 2, f. 50	Miller, J. W. Carbon copy form letters and stock option applications	1893
b. 2, f. 51	Stevens, C. Amory. Letters to John C. F. Gardner	1894
b. 2, f. 52	Weed, Smith M. Signed carbon copy of form letter to stockholders	1893
Press Notices and News Clippings Related to Bartlett Plan of Reorganization		
b. 2, f. 53	Newspaper notices and invoices	1894
b. 2, f. 54	Clippings	1879-1880
b. 2, f. 55-56	Clippings	1888, 1894
Legal Documents Related to Louis Chable v. Nicaragua Canal Construction Company		
b. 2, f. 57	Typescript drafts of legal document, corrected	1894
b. 2, f. 58	Gardner, John C. F., letters from law firms	1894-1895
b. 2, f. 59	Notice of Chable lawsuit printed in <i>New York Times</i>	1894

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.

Geographic Names

Nicaragua Canal (Nicaragua)
Nicaragua -- Charters, grants, privileges
Nicaragua -- Foreign relations -- United States
United States -- Foreign relations -- Nicaragua

Subjects

Canals, Interoceanic
Canals -- Nicaragua

Genres / Formats

Charters
Legal instruments

Corporate Bodies

Nicaragua Canal Construction Company
Nicaragua Maritime Canal Company