

# PANAMA

AS A CROSSROADS



An Interactive  
Traveler's Journal.





THIS BOOK BELONGS  
TO



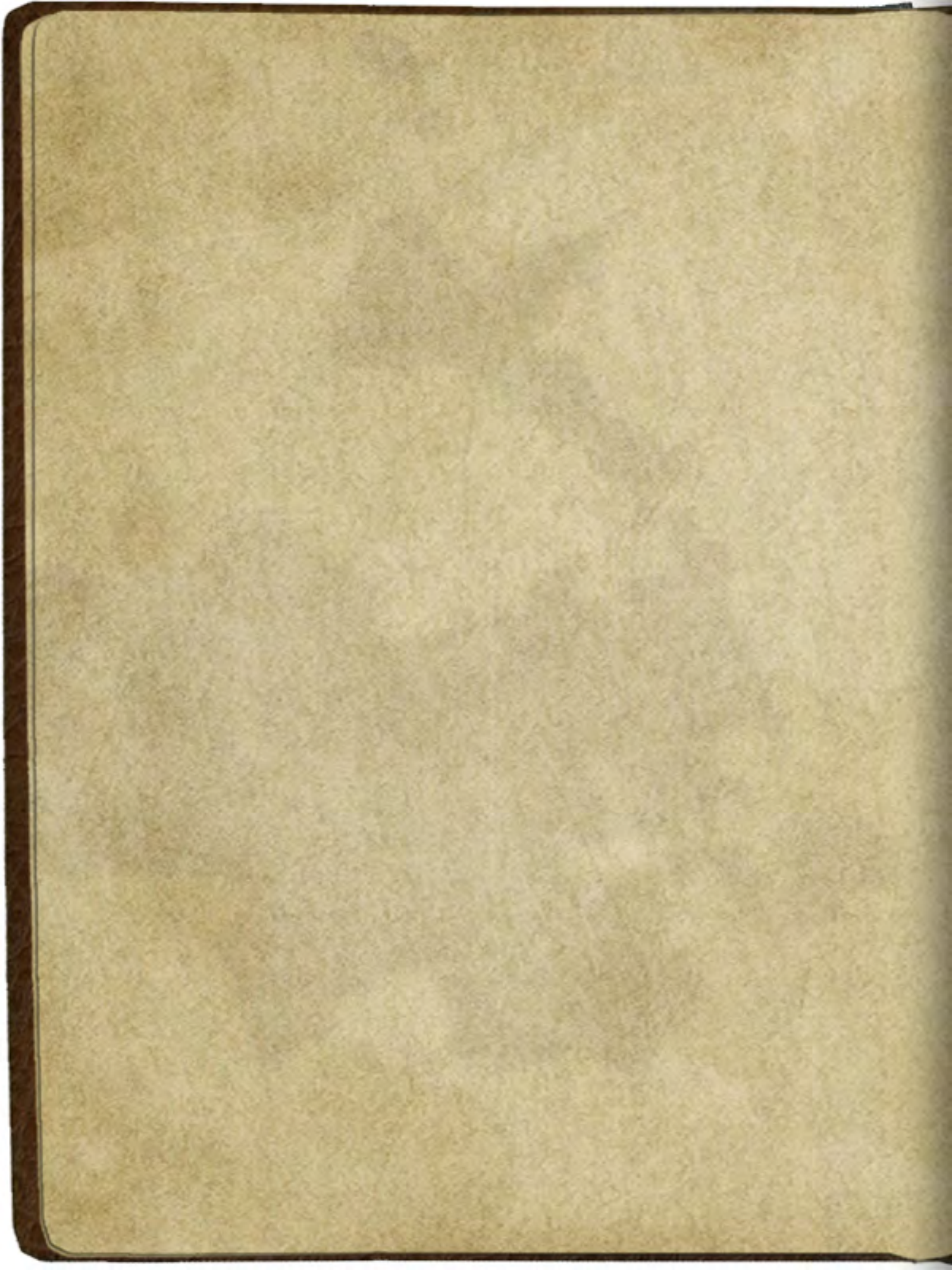
Smithsonian Latino Center





**PANAMA**  
**AS A CROSSROADS**







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Blue Morpho



# Panama

(a place abundant with fish)

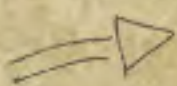
All butterflies courtesy of Smithsonian  
Tropical Research Institute.



...the Pacific Coast is awesome!!!

Europeans found in Panama a place that had been heavily populated over thousands of years. The abundance they found was not a simple gift of nature but rather a reflection of deliberate efforts by indigenous peoples to cultivate and harvest Panama's rich ecologies.





Marsupial  
Saber-Toothed  
Tiger

Animals of South American origin now living in United States

- ✓ opossum
- ✓ porcupine
- ✓ armadillo

The closing of the isthmus 3 to 4 million years ago separated what had once been a united body of water into two ecologically different realms. Organisms were now forced to adapt to different conditions. Over time, some evolved into different species

## Great American Biotic Interchange

The completion of the Isthmus of Panama 3 to 4 million years ago enabled the mass migration of plants and animals between North and South America, an event that scientists call the "Great American Biotic Interchange." Central America, including Panama, became one of the great biological meeting grounds in the history of life on Earth.



...a pelican







Aerial view of the lagoons of Bocas del Toro





on Panama's western Caribbean Coast.



# Indigenous Groups

Research has shown that Panama was more than a mere passageway between indigenous societies located elsewhere. It has also developed a keener appreciation of the continuities that have linked indigenous societies in Panama over time.



This Panamanian one-cent coin bears the profile of Urracá, an indigenous leader who famously resisted Spanish intrusion in Panama in the early 1500s.







The following indigenous groups live in Panama today: Bokota, Bribri, Buglé, Emberá, Kuna, Ngöbe (or Ngäbe), Teribe (or Naso), and Wounaan.



This image from a 1699 engraving shows a Kuna leader and his entourage as they greet English visitors to the Caribbean coast of Panama. In their efforts to resist Spanish rule, Kuna and other indigenous leaders sometimes formed alliances with Spain's European enemies, including English and Dutch pirates.



an albacore!!

This hammered plaque was made sometime after 750 CE!



after 750 CE!





This map shows the transit zone during the colonial period. Red dashes show overland routes and blue dots indicate Spanish towns and villages.



# Panamanian Routes



Silver and other goods from the Americas, enslaved Africans, and manufactured goods from Europe and Asia, were transported across the isthmus using teams of mules or a combination of mule transit and transport on the Chagres River.

## CAPTAIN MORGAN

The most famous pirate attack on Panama was led by Welshman Henry Morgan in 1671, depicted here in an 18th-century English engraving. The original Panama City was destroyed and the Spanish moved the colonial capital to a more defensible area nearby—the present location of Panama City's Casco Viejo ("Old Quarter").



Christopher Columbus first realized that Panama was an isthmus; however, Vasco Núñez de Balboa was the first to reach the Pacific Coast, in 1513.





Apricot Sulphur

In the late 1690s, Scotland attempted to establish a colony called New Caledonia on the Caribbean coast of eastern Panama. Most of the colonists soon died of hunger and disease.

The failure of the colony led to the financial crisis in Scotland that contributed to Scotland's union with England in 1707.

The Spaniards arrived in Panama while looking for a route to East Asia. They were seeking riches, new lands to conquer, and people to convert to Christianity.

A transit system linked Panama City to the port of Nombre de Dios (replaced in 1597 by Portobelo). West of Panama City, along the Pacific side of the isthmus, agricultural settlements were founded, including Nata and Fonseca. This agricultural region, known as El Interior, provided beef, corn, and other foods for the society that grew along the transit route.





The Bay of Caledonia lies about 9 Leagues west of the Gulf of Daxien

we found the Ground near Golden Is land very foul and Rocky full of deep holes and uncertain Soundings, But within the Rock in the Bay is very good Anchor ground, and here is plenty of Excellent good Water, Ships may enter the Bay at either side of the Rock but the East side is the best. A Place where upon Druggin for Stones to make an Oven at it a considerable mixture of Gold was found in them. Wood increases here prodigiously for the many scores of Acres wee cleared, yet in a few Months after it was so overgrown as if no body had been there.

Golden Island



Point Look Out

The SCOTS Settlement in AMERICA call'd NEW CALEDONIA. A.D. 1699. Lat. 8 30 North.

According to an Original Draught By H. Moll Geographer

The Outward Bay

Fort St Andrew

A Rock

of Caledonia

Morais

New Edinburgh

Pt Desire

The Inward Bay

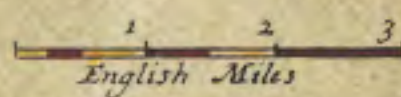
of Caledonia

THE GREAT BAY

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English Miles

Courtesy of the Museo del Canal Interoceánico de Panamá.



# Global Economies



This pendant was created by an indigenous goldsmith and found in the region of Bocas del Toro.

Indigenous peoples in Panama used gold ornaments to mark differences in status and power.



Silver was the precious metal

that made it possible for Europeans to increase their trade with China.



The first Gold Rush immigrants from the United States usually crossed Panama by traveling up the Chagres River in canoe-like boats called bongos and then continuing by mule or on foot to Panama City, where they boarded ships bound for San Francisco.



Over the colonial period,  
the Afro-Panamanian  
presence grew in the local  
militia, politics, church  
leadership, and commerce.



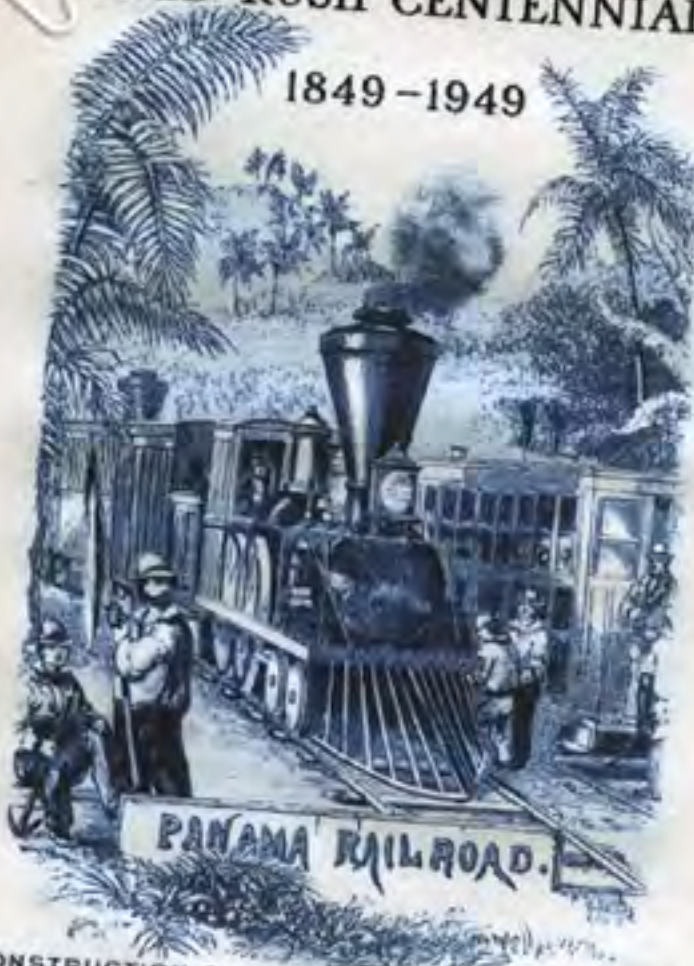
The first transcontinental  
railroad was built in  
Panama in 1855 by the  
Panama Railroad Company  
of New York City. The com-  
pany controlled the transit  
system and the revenues  
generated by the railroad.

Between 1849 and the  
completion of the second  
transcontinental railroad  
(across the United States)  
in 1869, much of the mail  
sent between the east and  
west coasts of the United  
States traveled by way of  
Panama.

The completion of the  
railroad led to an economic  
depression in Panama, as  
money that travelers had  
previously paid to Panama-  
nian workers and business  
owners now flowed into  
the coffers of the Panama  
Railroad Company and  
U.S. and British-owned  
steamship companies. The  
Panama Route remained  
one of the major communi-  
cation arteries between the  
east and west coasts of the  
United States until the  
completion in 1869 of the  
second transcontinental  
railroad—one that led not  
across Panama but the  
United States.

## CANAL ZONE GOLD RUSH CENTENNIAL

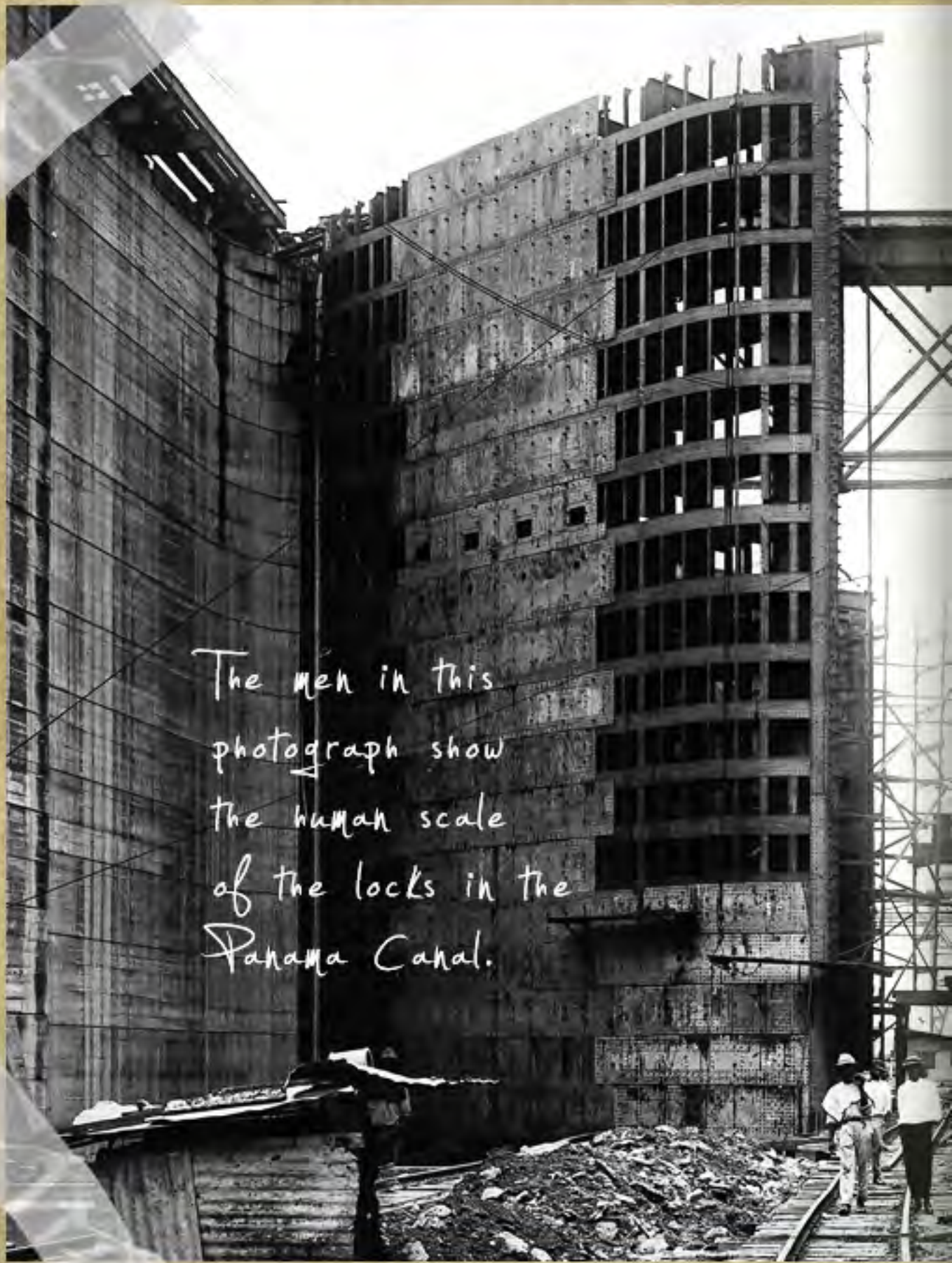
1849-1949



CONSTRUCTION OF THE PANAMA RAILROAD, MADE  
NECESSARY BY THE DISCOVERY OF GOLD IN CALIFORNIA,  
WAS BEGUN IN 1849 AND COMPLETED FROM OCEAN  
TO OCEAN IN 1855. FROM 1852 PASSENGER TRAINS,  
CONNECTING WITH EVERY STEAMER, CARRIED THOUSANDS  
OF GOLD SEEKERS ON THE WAY TO CALIFORNIA.

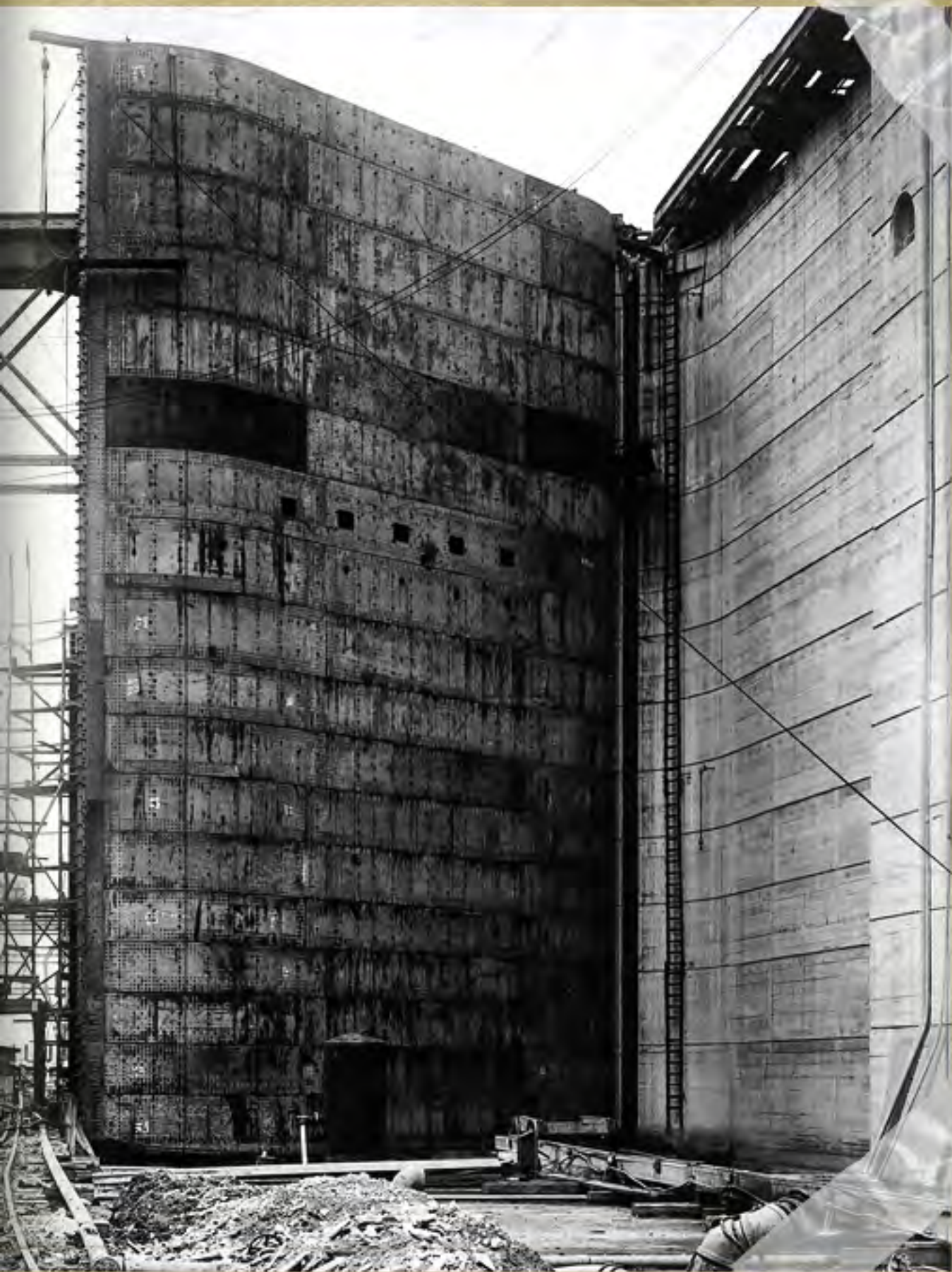






The men in this  
photograph show  
the human scale  
of the locks in the  
Panama Canal.







# Building the Canal



The French company led by Ferdinand de Lesseps pursued the building of the Panama Canal. The attempt failed due to technological problems, engineering miscalculations, and difficulties establishing the appropriate workforce. Malaria and yellow fever also decimated the workforce.





# The U.S. Canal Effort

The official U.S. effort to construct a canal across the Isthmus of Panama began in May 1904 and concluded with canal's inauguration in August 1914. The bulk of the work took place within the region known as the "Canal Zone," a band of land ten miles in width that stretched almost fifty miles across the Isthmus. The controversial Hay-Bunau-Barilla Treaty of 1903 granted the United States control of the zone "in perpetuity."

The construction of the canal involved many thorny technological problems, including the building of massive locks, the creation of a large artificial lake (Gatún Lake), and the excavation and removal of millions of tons of earth under extremely inhospitable conditions. The most famous construction site was the Culebra or Gaillard Cut, which passed through the Continental Divide and reached a maximum width of approximately

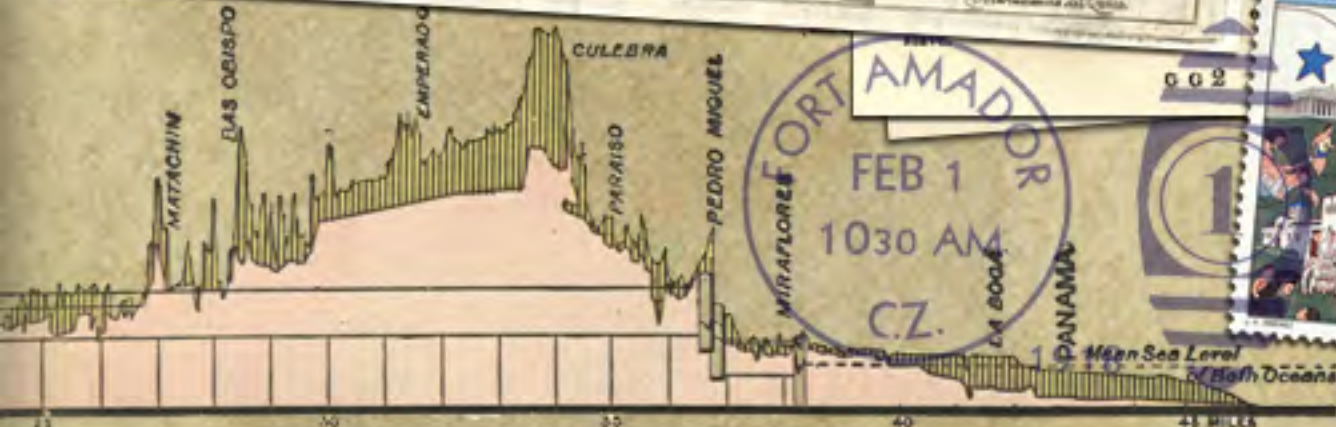


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driven by Indian  
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at city. See a cir-  
in the "History of

nama, he settled the follow-





# Impact of the Canal

The Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute (STRI) is the leading international research center dedicated to increasing understanding of tropical ecosystems. It is the only unit of the Smithsonian Institution that is headquartered outside of the United States.



## Smithsonian



Scientists at the STRI are studying the role of tropical forests in maintaining the health of Panama's

ecosystems including the area around the Panama Canal.

Isthmus of Panama.

Native washerwomen.

Better boats fixed to the hills we have than fly to those we do not. Panama? Boy a friend.

Panama 8/2/04





STRI's origins are intertwined with the building of the Panama Canal.

In 1910, U.S. President William Taft authorized the Smithsonian

Institution to coordinate the biological

survey of the Panama Canal watershed. In

1911, at the request

of the government of Panamanian President Belisario Porras the Smithsonian scientists extended the survey to the rest of the country, initiating a history of cooperation between Panama and the Smithsonian.





U.S. President Jimmy Carter and Gen. Omar Torrijos of Panama at the signing ceremony of the 1977 Carter-Torrijos Treaties. The

exercise of Panamanian sovereignty over the canal was a long-standing goal of Panamanian leaders in the twentieth century.



Panamanian President Mireya Moscoso and former U.S. president Jimmy Carter at ceremony marking the completion of the transfer of the Panama Canal to Panamanian control on December 1, 1999.



# Panama in the 21st Century

Between 1856 and 1903, U.S. troops would intervene militarily in Panama thirteen times.



Panamanian aspirations for sovereignty or self-determination have been intertwined with the desire to develop Panama's most treasured resource, the transit route across the isthmus.

## Sovereignty with Reach.



The signing and execution of the 1977 treaties realized Panamanian aspirations to exercise the right of sovereignty over the entirety of their own national territory. Although the treaties were hailed by supporters in the United States, Panama, and Latin America more generally, opposition to the treaties

also arose. Opponents from the United States accused the Carter administration of surrendering the Panama Canal, which they saw as a vital component of national security constructed at enormous financial and human cost to the United States.





# Panama Canal Expansion



The bulk of the work took place within the region known as the Canal Zone, a band of land ten miles in width that stretched almost fifty miles across the Isthmus.





## ...initiating a history of cooperation between Panama and the Smithsonian.

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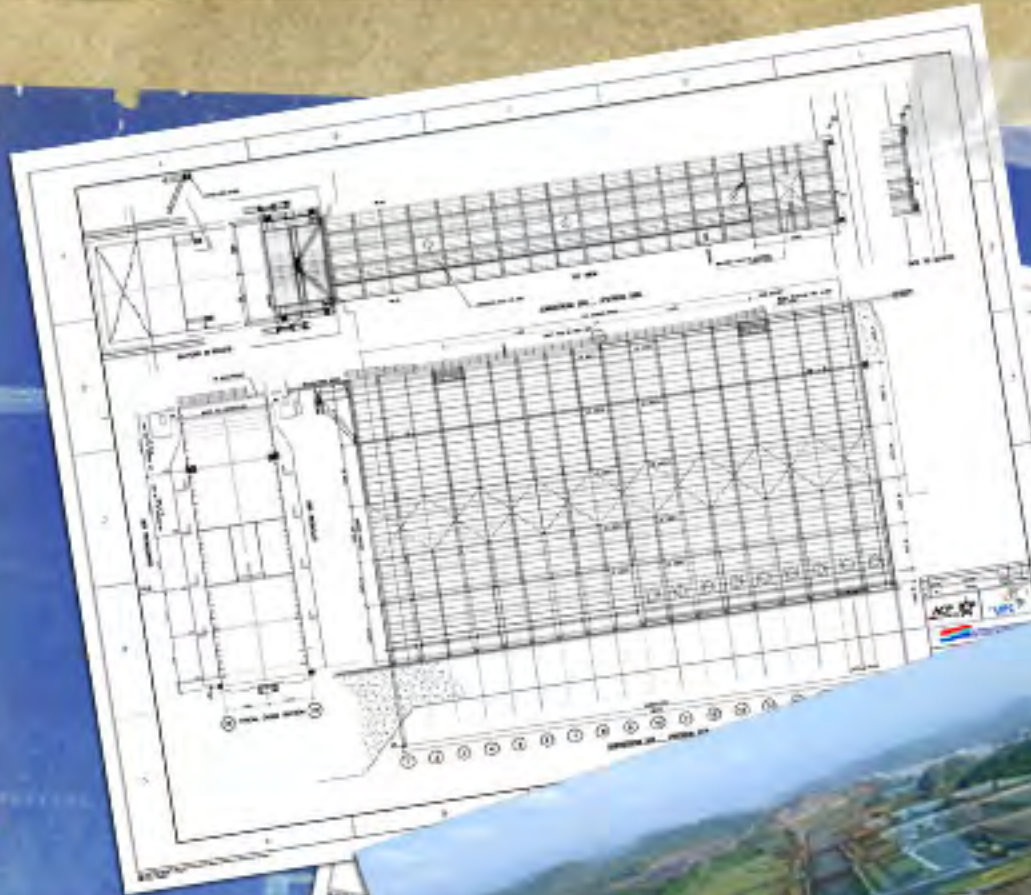




# Panama Canal Expansion



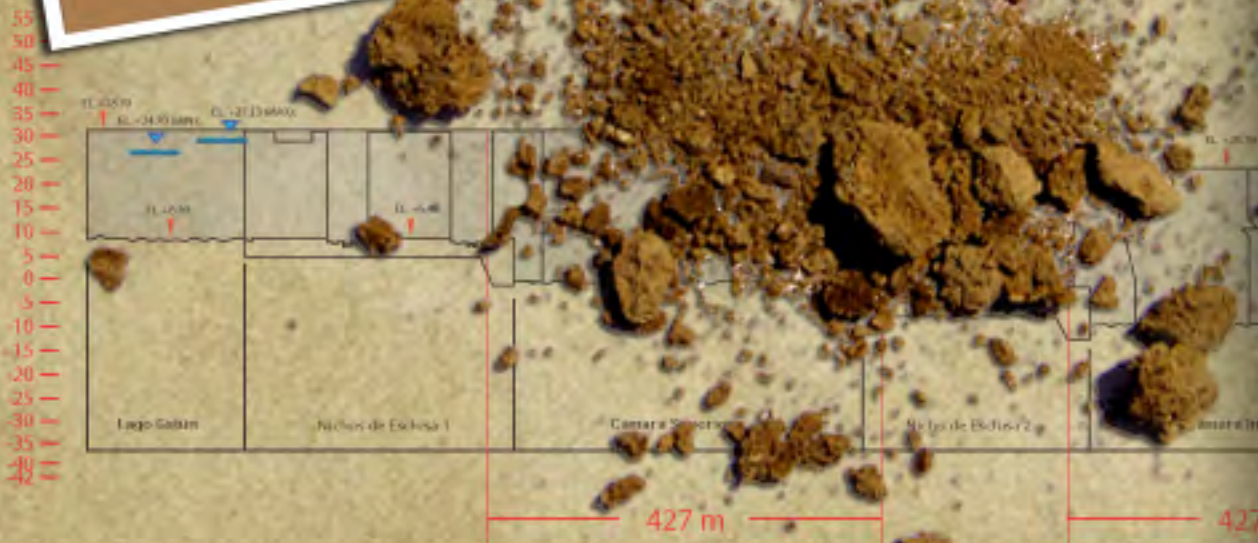




The project will build a new lane of traffic along the Panama Canal through the construction of a new set of locks, which will double capacity and allow more traffic and longer, wider ships.



# Panama Canal Expansion





Scientists at the Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute are studying the role of tropical forests in maintaining the health of Panama's ecosystems including the area around the Panama





# Credits



Courtesy of the Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute (butterfly and photo) and NASA/JPL-Caltech (map)

Courtesy of the Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute (marsupial) and the John Carter Brown Library at Brown University (pelican)



Courtesy of the Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute (photo)



Courtesy of the Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute (butterfly, photo) the Museo del Canal Interoceánico de Panamá (coin, stamp), the John Carter Brown Library at Brown University (illustration)



Courtesy of the National Museum of the American Indian (medallion), the Museo del Canal Interoceánico de Panamá, (photo, postcard) the John Carter Brown Library at Brown University (illustrations)





Courtesy of Alfredo Castellero Calvo (map)

Courtesy of the the Museo del Canal Interoceánico de Panamá (coin), the Smithsonian National Postal Museum background illustration), the John Carter Brown Library at Brown University (illustration)



Courtesy of the Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute, (butterfly) the Museo del Canal Interoceánico de Panamá (stamp) and Alfredo Castellero Calvo (map)

Courtesy of the Museo del Canal Interoceánico de Panamá



Courtesy of the Smithsonian National Postal Museum (stamp), the National Museum of the American Indian (idols) and Alfredo Castellero Calvo (coin, boat illustration)

Courtesy of the Museo del Canal Interoceánico de Panamá (train illustration), the Archivo General de Indias (artilleryman illustration)







Courtesy of the Museo del Canal Interoceánico de Panamá



Courtesy of the Museo del Canal Interoceánico de Panamá (blue, green and red stamps, \$50, illustration, certificate), the Smithsonian National Postal Museum (green and yellow stamps),

Courtesy of the Museo del Canal Interoceánico de Panamá



Courtesy of the Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute (photos), the Museo del Canal Interoceánico de Panamá (postcard)







Courtesy of the Museo del Canal Interoceánico de Panamá



Courtesy of the Museo del Canal Interoceánico de Panamá



Courtesy of the John Francis Little Panama Canal Scrapbook, Archives Center, National Museum of American History, Smithsonian Institution (photo), ACP (photos), Smithsonian National Postal Museum (stamp), STRI (drawing)



Courtesy of the Museo del Canal Interoceánico de Panamá (map, magazine cover), ACP (photo), Musical score courtesy of Mark Barnwell, Voice talent: Catherine H. Piña



Courtesy of the ACP; STRI location images courtesy of Alyssa Reiner, photographer; Musical score courtesy of Mark Barnwell, Voice talent: Catherine H. Piña





Courtesy of the ACP; Musical score  
courtesy of Mark Barnwell, Voice  
talent: Catherine H. Piña

Courtesy of the ACP (canal  
photo), STRI (frog)





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