

# CANAL GATOR TALES

December 2023

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## Fall Fundraising Campaign Update

We are only two weeks away from the end of our 12-week fundraising campaign to raise \$12,000 to support our Oral History program. Thanks to everyone who has already contributed! If you haven't made a gift yet, please consider doing so before December 31st. Not only will your contribution be counted towards the campaign total, but it is the perfect time to make those end-of-year, tax-deductible donations.

As a reminder, we selected \$12,000 as our target amount so that we can combine it with the \$13,000 raised by the Friends of the PCMC during their 2023 Silent Auction to create a grand total of \$25,000. This year is the 25th anniversary of the founding of the Panama Canal Museum in 1998, and we believe that raising \$25,000 is a nice tribute to the legacy of the museum.

Visit <https://pcmc.uflib.ufl.edu/oralhistory> to learn how you can support our campaign and help us to continue to document stories of life in the Canal Zone and Panama. All funds raised during this Fall campaign will be contributed towards our Oral History Campaign so that we can continue to conduct interviews and share them globally in our digital collection. Your contribution of any amount will directly support our oral history program. In addition, a donation of \$26 or more automatically renews your membership in the Friends of the PCMC. If you have questions, please contact Susan Harris at [susanharris@ufl.edu](mailto:susanharris@ufl.edu) or call (352) 273-2505.

As we close out 2023, we want to thank you for supporting the collection so generously. Your contributions make a big difference!

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## Special Blog Posts

This week, we published the final post in a [special series of posts on the PCMC Blog](#) focusing on the important work of both the Panama Canal Museum and the Friends of

the PCMC in building the collection and developing our oral history program. As mentioned previously, this year is the 25th anniversary of the founding of the Panama Canal Museum in 1998. The museum operated for 14 years in Seminole, Florida, before closing in 2012 and transferring its collection to UF. The successes achieved by the museum paved the way for the PCMC to develop as a preeminent research collection. Many of the museum's leaders, volunteers, and supporters have continued to be actively involved with the collection and provide guidance as members of our Friends group, and we're thrilled with all that we have accomplished together.

The final post in the series, [Lessons with Lucho](#), highlights the importance of the museum and the Friends group in developing the collection and also the importance of oral histories and personal memories in documenting the American era of the Canal. The post includes images of Lucho Azcarraga and his album covers that the museum began collecting years ago, and also a clip from an oral history interview with Don Randel and excerpts from the memoirs of our Friends Frank Baldwin, Frank Townsend, and Sydney Townsend Corbett.



Lucho Azcarraga and Frank Townsend, 1992

Personal stories and memories are vital in documenting history because they provide much-needed context for the historical objects we preserve and enhance our ability to raise awareness and increase understanding. We take the same approach of combining historical objects with personal stories in our exhibitions in the [Nahmad Panama Canal Gallery](#) and in the teaching that we do here at UF and other places. We always like to acknowledge that this approach and these activities are simply a continuation of the good work started by the museum 25 years ago. We hope that you have enjoyed the posts!



## Yes, We Are Always Collecting

We are asked frequently what types of materials we collect, and some people even want to know whether or not we collect anything at all. Rest assured, we are constantly acquiring important historical objects, everything from family photos and letters to artifacts and memorabilia. In fact, the collection is always growing at a healthy rate and the large majority of our acquisitions are gifts rather than purchases. We are regularly contacted by family members and friends who have inherited materials from deceased loved ones who aren't sure if we would be interested in anything. Yes, we definitely want those treasures. No, we do not accept everything offered to us. Our main reason for declining gifts is that we already have the items (e.g., this is particularly true of books and periodicals). Here are some of our "most wanted" items that we collect:

- Diaries, journals, memoirs, firsthand accounts, oral histories, and other types of personal narratives that offer unique perspectives and stories.
- Correspondence such as letters, telegrams, and postcards.
- Home movies, films, and audio or video recordings.
- Photographs in all formats and types: prints, slides, negatives, aerial photos, panoramic, stereographs, etc.
- Scrapbooks. In general, we do not collect scrapbooks full of newspaper clippings. Please do not assemble archival materials into a scrapbook before donating.
- Ephemera such as brochures, pamphlets, programs, menus, and travel guides. We already have a lot of these in the PCMC and we do not collect duplicates normally, but we do want to collect ephemera that we have not already preserved.

Our Collection Committee will consider anything offered to us, so don't hesitate to contact us even if your items aren't included on this list. For many of the objects listed above, we do accept digital reproductions if donors are not willing to donate the original objects.

Please contact John Nemmers at [jnemmers@ufl.edu](mailto:jnemmers@ufl.edu) or 253-273-2766 if you are interested in donating any materials. Thanks for helping us to expand and strengthen the collection!



## Cruise to Hawaii in 2024

Since 2004, the Panama Canal Museum and the Friends of the Panama Canal Museum Collection have arranged exciting fundraising cruises each year to support the collection. In 2024, join us on a cruise to Hawaii on Norwegian Cruise Line's Pride of America. The 7-day inter-island cruise starts at Honolulu with stops at Kahului, Hilo, Kona, and Nawiliwili. For every cabin booked our travel agent, Condor Tours & Travels, will make a donation to UF in the name of the PCMC Friends. We are indeed grateful to Lori Snow and Condor Tours & Travels for their generous support of the

collection! Contact Lori Snow via email at [lori@condortt.com](mailto:lori@condortt.com) or call 770-339-9961 for more information.

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## Friends Memberships

If you haven't done so already, now is a good time to renew your membership in the Friends of the Panama Canal Museum Collection at UF. If you are not a member already, please consider joining!

The funds collected are used to support education and research through the preservation, conservation, digitization, and processing of the collection. Funds also support the creation and development of local, traveling, and online exhibits that increase awareness about the collection, the Panama Canal, and the people of Panama and the Canal Zone.

We maintain these efforts through the support of friends like you when you join or renew your membership. Dues and donations qualify for tax deductions. Thank you for your continued support of the PCMC at UF. To join or renew membership in the Friends of the Panama Canal Museum Collection visit <https://apps.uflib.ufl.edu/pcmmembership/> or call 352-273-2505 for more information.



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### SAVE THESE DATES

#### **October-December, 2023**

Fall campaign to raise \$12,000 for the Oral History Campaign.

#### **Ongoing thru March 2024**

*Cutting Edge* exhibition in the Albert H. Nahmad Panama Canal Gallery at UF, which examines the engineering of the Panama Canal. Visit <https://pcmc.uflib.ufl.edu/exhibits/>.

#### **April 6, 2024**

Panama Canal Society/Friends of the PCMC Spring Luncheon at Smathers Library, University of Florida, Gainesville. Join us for the opening of our new exhibition in the Nahmad Panama Canal Gallery on the history of the railroad.

#### **July 3-7, 2024**

Panama Canal Society Reunion, Orlando. Join us for our annual Silent Auction, museum exhibit, and Cultural Seminar. As always, we're looking for both volunteers to help manage the auction and for people to donate items. Please contact Carole Miller ([czmiller345@gmail.com](mailto:czmiller345@gmail.com)) or Kathy Egolf ([Pankee@aol.com](mailto:Pankee@aol.com)) if you have items to donate or if you want to volunteer to help out.

**September 14-21, 2024**

Join the Friends of the PCMC for a 7-day inter-island NCL cruise from Honolulu, September 14-21. Prices start at \$1,647 per person. Contact: Lori Snow ([lori@condortt.com](mailto:lori@condortt.com) or via phone at 770-339-9961).