

CANAL GATOR TALES

October 2023

Fall Fundraising Campaign Underway

Thank you to everyone who has already contributed to our 12-week fundraising campaign to raise \$12,000 to support our Oral History program. We selected \$12,000 as our target amount so that when combined with the incredible \$13,000 raised by the Friends of the PCMC during the Silent Auction at the Panama Canal Society Reunion we will have raised a 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 so please help us achieve our goal. We kicked off the Fall campaign at the beginning of the month and it will run through the end of the year.

If you haven't done so already, please 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 or call (352) 273-2505.

Thank you for your generosity in supporting the collection!

New Acquisition Documents Over a Century of History in Panama and the Canal Zone

Although the primary focus of the PCMC is on the history of the Panama Canal in the 20th Century, we are also very interested in documenting the history of Panama prior to the Canal's construction. Recently, we received a terrific donation of family

papers spanning from the late 1840s through the 1970s and cover not only the history of the Canal but also the history of Panama, the Panama Railroad, and Colombia. The majority of the Malsbury Family papers and photographs pertain to Charles Schuber Malsbury, his father Omer Evert Malsbury, and his mother Carmen Schuber Malsbury.

Charles Schuber Malsbury was born in 1913 at Ancon Hospital, and he graduated from Balboa High School in 1933. Charles worked for the Panama Railroad and Panama Canal for over thirty years starting in 1930 while he was still in high school. He moved away from the Canal Zone briefly to attend the University of Missouri, but returned after graduating and held several positions, including working as a clerk and storekeeper for the U.S. Army at Fort Clayton during World War II. He began working as a Meteorological Aid starting in 1957 and spent the remainder of his career as a Meteorological Technician in the Engineering and Construction Bureau. Charles retired in 1971 and died in 1987. His papers document his education, his employment, his work with the meteorological stations, and his personal life.

Charles Malsbury's father, Omer E. Malsbury, was a civil engineer who was born in Kansas in 1881 and graduated from the University of Missouri. He moved to the Canal Zone in 1905 to work for the Isthmian Canal Commission. Omer worked for the Panama Railroad Company and the Panama Canal for over thirty years, retiring in 1937. He specialized in topographic, hydrographic, and cadastral surveys. He served as a construction engineer on Madden Dam, as a location and bridge construction engineer for the Inter-American Highway, and as Chief of the Trans-Isthmian Highway Location team. He consulted on, and had special appointments to, international boundary conflict survey teams in Central and South America, and he also served as a Major of Engineers during World War I. He was one of the founders of the Panama Golf Club, the Century Club, and the Union Club in Panama City. Omer died in 1970. Omer Malsbury's papers date from 1905 through the 1960s and span his career working for the Railroad and Panama Canal, as well as his consultancies after retirement. The letters and reports relate to activities such as the Alajuela Dam Survey project, his work mapping the interior of Panama (including David, Aguadulce, Chitré, and Penonome), an expedition to Darien in the 1920s, and his work on the Trans-Isthmian Highway and Inter-American Highway.

Charles Malsbury's mother, Carmen Schuber Malsbury, was the daughter of James Buchanan Schuber (born 1856) and Josefa Dolores Rice Arosemena (born 1867). Josefa Dolores Rice Arosemena was the daughter of Francis Warren Rice (1815-1888), who served as an early U.S. consul to Colombia, and the collection includes original handwritten copies of letters sent from Rice in Aspinwall to Secretary of State William H. Seward reporting on the Colombian Civil War in 1863 and its impacts on U.S. interests on the Isthmus, particularly to the Panama Railroad and steamship agencies. James Buchanan Schuber was a U.S. citizen who was employed by the Panama Railroad and lived in Panama. His father, Henry Schuber, had been traveling with his brother to California in 1849 at the height of the Gold Rush and they decided instead to remain in Panama and invest there rather than in California. Henry Schuber had homes on Taboga and on Central Avenue in Panama City. The Schuber Brothers built the Hotel Central in 1884 and owned much of the land that later became the region of the Canal Zone stretching from the Pacific to Fort Clayton. The

collection includes a few papers of Henry Schuber pertaining to his lands and businesses.

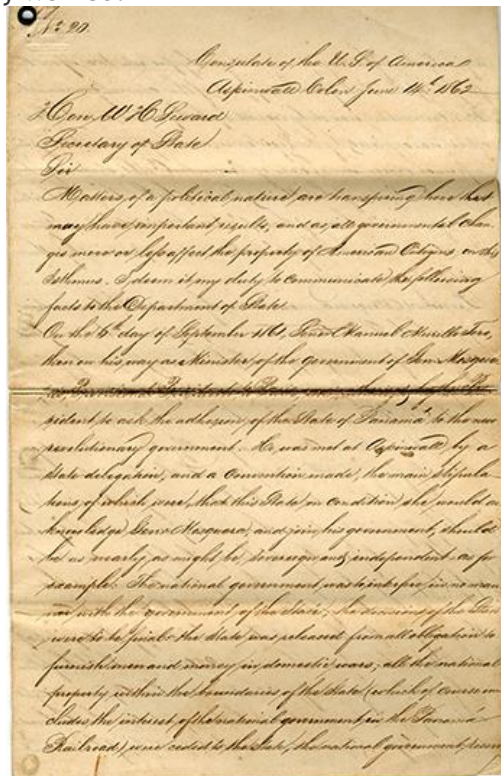
The collection was recently donated by Brenda Nichols of Arkansas, who was assisting a close friend in finding a home for the papers of Charles Malsbury. Fortunately, historians at the University of Arkansas referred them to the PCMC and we were eager to accept the collection. In addition to many letters, reports, and legal and financial documents, the collection includes hundreds of photos, as well as three photo albums and a baby book, that depict all of the family members and their lives and careers in Panama and the Canal Zone. Charles Malsbury's two sisters, Helen Jacqueline (or Jackie) and Carmen, are represented in several photos but the collection has few letters or papers pertaining to the women. The collection also includes genealogical materials that Charles Malsbury compiled about members of the Schuber, Rice, and Kaiser family members. We have no doubt that this collection will be an important resource for scholars, students, and researchers for years to come.



Family photograph with parents Omer E. Malsbury and Carmen Schuber Malsbury and their children: Helen Jacqueline (or Jackie), Carmen, and Charles (or Charlie).



A page from one of the Malsbury Family photo albums with photos depicting the exterior and interior of the Madden Dam Hydrographic Office, one of the locations where Charles Malsbury worked.



Handwritten copy of a letter written by F.W. Rice from the U.S. Consulate in Aspinwall Colon on June 14, 1862, to Secretary of State W.H. Seward in Washington.



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 or call 770-339-9961 for more information.

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.



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.

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 or via phone at 770-339-9961).