

# CANAL GATOR TALES

April 2019

## Friends Cruise to Cuba and the Caribbean



A group of over 40 Zonians, friends, and family members from nine states participated in the Friends' 2019 seven-day fundraising cruise to Cuba and the Bahamas on Royal Caribbean's *Empress of the Seas* on January 27--February 3. Rough seas greeted the cruisers the first night as the ship made its way from Miami to Havana. Learning on arrival in Havana the next morning that there had been a tornado there in Havana, the undeterred cruisers began two days and a night of sightseeing that included riding in the old cars, visiting fortresses and other historical and cultural sites, tasting the foods and drinks, shopping, and checking out the Havana night life. After all the activity and excitement of the first couple days and nights, most were ready for the more relaxed pace of two sea days and visits to Nassau and Royal Caribbean's private island, CocoCay, in the Bahamas.

Most afternoons the group gathered for social get-togethers before dinner. Travel Leaders hosted a social hour on the first sea day. See photo of cruisers on staircase holding their "Cuban Caribbean Cruise Cigars" (thick pretzels). Cruisers competed for various prizes at the second sea day social hour by playing a Cuba/Panama trivia game. Most of the cruisers dined at five tables in the same part of the dining room for the early dining hour, while others chose My Time

Dining or the later dining hour. All seemed to enjoy visiting with old friends and making new friends throughout the trip.

As a souvenir of the trip, cruisers received a booklet of information about the Spanish American War, a listing of some SAW veterans who worked on the construction of the Canal, etc. They also received an 18-month accordion fold calendar showing pictures of Cuban inspired ceramics. The ceramics, which are now on display at UF, are part of a collection belonging to Cuban historian Emilio Cueto. Thank you to all the cruisers who made this such a valuable fundraiser for the Friends of the Panama Canal Museum Collection at UF. Their participation in the cruise resulted in a donation of over \$1000 from Travel Leaders of Palm Coast.

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## New Resources for Researchers

We have two new resources for researchers available on the PCMC website. The first is a list of [Spanish American War veterans](#) buried at the Corozal American Cemetery in Panama. These veterans subsequently came to Panama to live and work on the Canal. The list was compiled by the Friends of the PCMC for the recent cruise to Cuba, as mentioned above. These veterans also have been added to our list of [Zonians in the Military](#).

The second new resource is an annotated [Panama Canal Bibliography](#) of books about the American period of the Panama Canal (1904-1999), compiled by Elizabeth Bemis, Ph.D. The bibliography is an ongoing effort, and we continue to find and add resources. We plan to add links to items that have been digitized and are available online in the UF Digital Collections or other digital libraries. The bibliography has already been very useful for grade school students conducting research as part of the National History Day competition.

All of these resources are available on the PCMC website on the Resources and Links page: <https://cms.uflib.ufl.edu/pcmc/links>.

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## Contribute to the *New Cocoli Dictionary*

Speaking of resources for researchers, we encourage all of you to participate in expanding the *New Cocoli Dictionary*, compiled by Carl N. Berg and Patricia D. Propst. This dictionary presents the most common definition or understanding of names, words, and phrases that were familiar during the American Era of the Panama Canal and Canal Zone. These definitions include English, Spanish, and French words.

The original focus of the dictionary was the townsite of Cocolí, and it was expanded in August 2015 to include the greater Canal Zone. The scope of the geographic and date span coverage was expanded significantly in subsequent revisions, culminating in this 2017 edition: <http://ufdc.ufl.edu/AA00061372/00001>

To suggest additional terms or contribute new information, you can visit the [New Cocoli Dictionary post](#) on the PCMC Blog and leave a comment.

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## A Look at the Numbers

We have had an increase in use of the PCMC over the last year. Here are a few numbers to give you an idea of how the collection is being used:

- Between March 2018 and March 2019, we received 86 research questions, which is up from 49 questions received in 2017-18. Popular topics include

genealogy, nurses, geography, Caribbean workers, Roosevelt Medal holders, construction equipment, treaties, and photographs of the Canal and CZ. In addition to scholars and college students, we've had an increase in the number of grade school students, particularly those who are working on National History Day projects.

- Materials have been used in 6 undergraduate and graduate courses at UF in the past year. The disciplines include History, Art History, and Museum Studies. Two of the courses, which are offered through the UF Honors Program, were developed after faculty were awarded incentives by the Friends of the PCMC.
- There were 4,891,311 views of the [Panama & the Canal](#) digital collection from March 2018 to March 2019. The most viewed title to date (2012-present) is the *Panama American* (<http://ufdc.ufl.edu/AA00010883>) with 9,383,514 views. The most viewed item to date is the 1975 *Zonian Yearbook* (<http://ufdc.ufl.edu/UF00093678/00060>) with 136,480 views.
- The PCMC Blog was viewed 57,543 times (42,233 in 2017-18) by 21,832 visitors (15,383 in 2017-18).
- Between March 2018 and February 2019, over 40 donors contributed more than 2,500 items including family letters, post cards, photographs, scrapbooks, and video recordings. We will include a list of donated materials and donors in the April *Canal Gator Tales*.

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## Looking Ahead to the Panama Canal Society Reunion

We will be focusing on the 30th Anniversary of Operation Just Cause at the Panama Canal Society Reunion this year in Orlando, July 3-7, 2019. The PCMC exhibition will feature photos and documents relating to Operation Just Cause, Manuel Noriega, and the experiences of Zonians before and during the military operation. If you have interesting stories to share, please contact Liz Bouton at [dizliz@ufl.edu](mailto:dizliz@ufl.edu) or (352) 273-2685.

We are working with the PCS to plan the Cultural Seminar, which will feature a panel of experts to discuss the invasion from a variety of perspectives. Panelists include Joe Wood, Dick Morgan, Richard Wainio, Kurt Muse, and Bob Rupp. Kurt Muse also will make a special presentation about Operation Just Cause at the Annual Luncheon, which requires advance registration. Please see the [flyer](#) for more information about these activities.

We hope to see everyone in Orlando!

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## Help Support the Silent Auction!

The Friends of the PCMC will hold a silent auction again this year at the Panama Canal Society Reunion in Orlando, and we need your help. There are two ways you can contribute to this effort: 1) volunteer to be a part of the incredible team that manages the auction, and 2) donate objects for the auction. Your support ensures that we can raise funds to support the PCMC in a variety of activities including preservation, acquisitions, digitization, processing, and promotion of the collection.

If you would like to volunteer and/or you are interested in donating items to the auction, please contact Kathy Egolf ([pankee@aol.com](mailto:pankee@aol.com)) or Joan Ohman ([johman1@tampabay.rr.com](mailto:johman1@tampabay.rr.com)).

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Save These Dates

**July 3-7, 2019**

Exhibit, Auction and Cultural Seminar at the Panama Canal Society Reunion at the Orlando Marriott World Center. Please contact Kathy Egolf (pankee@aol.com) or Joan Ohman (johman1@tampabay.rr.com) if you have items to donate or wish to volunteer.

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