



CANAL GATOR TALES

July 2020

The PCMC During the Pandemic

It has been a few months since the last issue of *Canal Gator Tales*, primarily because of the COVID-19 pandemic, but rest assured that we have been busy working on a variety of activities.

As we reported back in the Spring, the Smathers Library Building closed to the public in March and we have been working remotely for the most part. We continue to respond to questions we receive regularly from researchers on diverse topics such as archaeology, architecture, Canal operations, and genealogy. We also continue to receive potential additions to the collection, including World War II-era photographs and letters, family photos and photo albums, and a small number of books and publications that we didn't already have in the collection. The Collection Committee will be meeting soon to review and discuss these possible acquisitions, and we'll have more information to report in an upcoming issue.

We also have been hard at work transcribing oral history interviews that we had conducted in February and early March, including interviews conducted at the joint Friends of the PCMC and Panama Canal Society luncheon on March 7. Also, we have been conducting interviews over the phone or computer while we've been working remotely during the pandemic. All interview recordings and transcripts will be posted in the [Panama and the Canal Oral Histories](#) digital collection.

Finally, we are currently looking ahead to the Fall semester which is scheduled to start in late August. If we open our building as planned, students and other researchers will be able to make appointments to use the collection. However, before making appointments we will first try to satisfy many research requests by scanning and delivering materials remotely. We're also expanding our capacity to provide virtual online instruction in lieu of in-person class visits. Regardless of whether we are open or not in the Fall, we'll continue to support research and education needs as best we can during these difficult times.

Website and Blog Redesign

The design and layout of the Panama Canal Museum Collection website (<https://cms.uflib.ufl.edu/pcmc>) will be changing in upcoming months as the UF George A. Smathers Libraries migrate all web pages to WordPress software. Although the look and feel of the website will be changing, the content of the website will not be changed significantly. Visitors will still have access to the *Panama and the Canal* digital collection, donor information, links and resources for researchers, and the PCMC blog, among other web pages.

The PCMC Blog has been managed as a WordPress website for many years now, but we're also migrating it and updating the layout. The new URL for the blog will be <https://pcmc.domains.uflib.ufl.edu/>. If you use the old blog URL, WordPress will

automatically redirect you to the new URL, but it's a good idea to go ahead and update your bookmark.

Exhibition News

We have two new online exhibitions related to physical exhibits that we have curated in past years. *Operation Just Cause* (<http://exhibits.uflib.ufl.edu/JustCAuse/>) is based on the exhibition of the same name that was presented at the Panama Canal Society Reunion in 2019 in Orlando, Florida. The exhibit, which was curated and designed by Liz Bouton, features photographs that depict the planning and post-operation effects of Operation Just Cause. The second exhibition, *Documenting Presence: Panama Canal Portraits 1909-1955* (<http://exhibits.uflib.ufl.edu/DocumentingPresence>), features images documenting visitors and laborers in the Canal. This online exhibit is based on the exhibition of the same name that was curated by Lourdes Santamaría-Wheeler and presented at the Tampa International Airport in 2015.

Unfortunately, the buildings on campus have been closed to the public during the pandemic and the current exhibition in the Albert H. Nahmad Panama Canal Gallery, *Are We Next? Fear and Social Roles in World War II*, hasn't been viewed by anyone since the opening at the Spring Luncheon in March. We're working on creating an online version of the exhibit, but in the meantime we're sharing some photos of the exhibition as it is displayed in the Smathers Library Building.

In upcoming issues, we will share additional images so that everyone can see how the exhibition is displayed in the Gallery. *Are We Next?* will be available in the Gallery until February 2021.



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