

# George W. Goethals Papers

## A Finding Aid to the Collection in the Library of Congress



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Manuscript Division, Library of Congress  
Washington, D.C.  
2012

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<http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.mss/mss.contact>

Additional search options available at:

<http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.mss/eadmss.ms013029>

LC Online Catalog record:

<http://lcn.loc.gov/mm80023002>

Prepared by Manuscript Division Staff

## Collection Summary

**Title:** George W. Goethals Papers

**Span Dates:** 1890-1954

**Bulk Dates:** (bulk 1907-1927)

**ID No.:** MSS23002

**Creator:** Goethals, George W. (George Washington), 1858-1928

**Extent:** 15,000 items ; 50 containers plus 1 oversize ; 18 linear feet ; 1 microfilm reel

**Language:** Collection material in English

**Location:** Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

**Summary:** Governor of the Canal Zone, army officer, and engineer. Diaries, correspondence, reports, memoranda, photographs, clippings, and scrapbooks relating chiefly to the construction of the Panama Canal, Goethals' term as governor of the Canal Zone, and his other public service positions.

## Selected Search Terms

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the Library's online catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically therein.

### People

Baker, Newton Diehl, 1871-1937--Correspondence.  
Barrett, John, 1866-1938--Correspondence.  
Bishop, Joseph Bucklin, 1847-1928--Correspondence.  
Bixby, William Herbert, 1849-1928--Correspondence.  
Bloom, Sol, 1870-1949--Correspondence.  
Bok, Edward William, 1863-1930--Correspondence.  
Borah, William Edgar, 1865-1940--Correspondence.  
Daniels, Josephus, 1862-1948--Correspondence.  
Denby, Edwin, 1870-1929--Correspondence.  
Garrison, Lindley M. (Lindley Miller), 1864-1932--Correspondence.  
Goethals, George W. (George Washington), 1858-1928.  
Gorgas, William Crawford, 1854-1920--Correspondence.  
Greely, A. W. (Adolphus Washington), 1844-1935--Correspondence.  
Harding, Chester, 1866-1936--Correspondence.  
Hodges, Harry F. (Harry Foot), 1860--Correspondence.  
Lansing, Robert, 1864-1928--Correspondence.  
Lodge, Henry Cabot, 1850-1924--Correspondence.  
Loeb, William, 1866-1937--Correspondence.  
Lorenze, M. O.--Correspondence.  
Mahan, A. T. (Alfred Thayer), 1840-1914--Correspondence.  
Pershing, John J. (John Joseph), 1860-1948--Correspondence.  
Roosevelt, Franklin D. (Franklin Delano), 1882-1945--Correspondence.  
Roosevelt, Theodore, 1858-1919--Correspondence.  
Sayre, Francis Bowes, 1885-1972--Correspondence.  
Sibert, William L. (William Luther), 1860-1935--Correspondence.  
Stimson, Henry L. (Henry Lewis), 1867-1950--Correspondence.  
Taft, William H. (William Howard), 1857-1930--Correspondence.  
Tumulty, Joseph P. (Joseph Patrick), 1879-1954--Correspondence.  
Wilson, Woodrow, 1856-1924--Correspondence.

### Organizations

Canal Zone. Office of the Governor.  
United States Shipping Board Emergency Fleet Corporation.

### Subjects

Anthracite Coal Strike, Pa., 1922.  
Canals--Panama.  
Eight-hour movement--United States.  
Fuel trade--United States.  
Labor laws and legislation--United States.  
Merchant marine--United States.  
Railroads--Employees.  
Strikes and lockouts--Pennsylvania.

#### **Places**

Canal Zone--History.  
Panama Canal (Panama)

#### **Occupations**

Army officers.  
Engineers.  
Governors--Canal Zone.

## **Administrative Information**

#### **Provenance**

The papers of George W. Goethals, governor of the Canal Zone, army officer, and engineer, were deposited in the Library of Congress in 1932 and converted to a gift in 1939 by his sons, George R. Goethals and Thomas R. Goethals. Additions were received in 1939, 1947, and 1954 as gifts from George R. Goethals and Thomas R. Goethals, Leslie C. McNemar, and Maurice J. Thatcher respectively.

#### **Processing History**

The Goethals Papers were processed in 1962. The finding aid was revised in 2012.

#### **Copyright Status**

Copyright in the unpublished writings of George W. Goethals in these papers and in other collections of papers in the custody of the Library of Congress is reserved by the donors during their lifetime and thereafter dedicated to the public.

#### **Access and Restrictions**

The papers of George W. Goethals are open to research. Researchers are advised to contact the Manuscript Reading Room prior to visiting. Many collections are stored off-site and advance notice is needed to retrieve these items for research use.

#### **Microfilm**

A microfilm edition of part of these papers is available on one reel. Consult reference staff in the Manuscript Division concerning availability for purchase or interlibrary loan. To promote preservation of the originals, researchers are required to consult the microfilm edition as available.

#### **Preferred Citation**

Researchers wishing to cite this collection should include the following information: Container or reel number, George W. Goethals Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

## **Biographical Note**

<i>Date</i>	<i>Event</i>
1858, 29 June	Born, Brooklyn, N.Y.

1880                    Graduated, United States Military Academy, West Point, N.Y.

1880-1882             Student officer, Engineering School of Application, Willetts Point, N.Y.

1882-1884             Engineer officer, Department of Columbia

1884                    Married Effie Rodman

1884-1885             Engineer officer, improvements on the Ohio River for navigation

1885-1889             Instructor and assistant professor of civil and military engineering, United States Military Academy, West Point, N.Y.

1889-1894             Engineer officer, improvements on the Cumberland and Tennessee Rivers, and in charge of completion of the Muscle Shoals Canal and construction of the Colbert Shoals Lock

1894-1898             Assistant to chief of engineers, United States Army

1898                    Chief engineer, First United States Army Corps, and campaign in Puerto Rico

1898-1900             Professor of practical military engineering, United States Military Academy, West Point, N.Y.

1900-1905             Engineer officer in charge of river and harbor works, Bolck Island to Nantucket, and the fortifications of Narragansett Bay and New Bedford, Mass.

1903-1907             Member, General Staff, United States Army

1905                    Graduated, United States Army War College  
Accompanied Secretary of War William H. Taft on an inspection trip to the Isthmus of Panama

1907                    Promoted to lieutenant colonel, United States Army  
Appointed by President Theodore Roosevelt as chairman and chief engineer, Isthmian Canal Commission

1907-1914             Chief engineer, construction of the Panama Canal

1909                    Promoted to colonel, United States Army

1911                    Appointed member of a Joint Board of Officers of the Army and Navy to make a report upon defenses for the Panama Canal

1914-1917             Governor, Panama Canal Zone

1915                    Promoted to major general, United States Army

1916                    Chairman of the board appointed to report on the Adamson Eight-Hour Law

1917                    General manager, United States Shipping Board Emergency Fleet Corp.  
Acting quartermaster general, United States Army

1918	Chief, Division of Storage and Traffic of the General Staff, United States Army Chief, Division of Purchase, Storage and Traffic United States Army
1918	Awarded Distinguished Service Medal for meritorious service in reorganizing the Quartermaster Department, United States Army
1919-1923	President and head engineer, George W. Goethals and Co., New York, N.Y.
1923	Fuel administrator of New York during Anthracite coal strike
1923-1928	Consulting engineer on projects such as Inner Harbor Navigation Canal, New Orleans, La.; Columbia Basin Irrigation Project; East Bay Municipal Utility District of Oakland, Calif; and Lake Worth Inlet District in Florida. Served New York-Jersey Port and Harbor Commission (later Port of New York Authority) as chief consulting engineer
1928, Jan. 21	Died, New York, N.Y.

## Scope and Content Note

The papers of George Washington Goethals (1858-1928) span the years 1890-1954, with the bulk of the material originating between 1907 and 1927. The collection includes desk diaries, family and general correspondence, reports, memoranda, photographs, clippings, and scrapbooks. The papers are organized into seven series: [Desk Diaries](#), [Family Correspondence](#), [General Correspondence](#), [Subject File](#), [Miscellany](#), [Scrapbooks](#), and [Oversize](#). The two series of correspondence dominate the collection.

The major portion of the collection concerns Goethals and the construction of the Panama Canal and his term as governor of the Panama Canal Zone. The remainder relates briefly to his service as general manager of the United States Shipping Board Emergency Fleet Corporation, his chairmanship of the board appointed to report on the Adamson Eight-Hour Law, and his tenure as fuel administrator of New York during the 1923 anthracite coal strike.

Prominent correspondents include Newton Diehl Baker, John Barrett, Joseph Bucklin Bishop, William Herbert Bixby, Sol Bloom, Edward William Bok, William Edgar Borah, Josephus Daniels, Edwin Denby, Lindley M. Garrison, William Crawford Gorgas, A. W. Greely, Edward Harding, Harry F. Hodges, Robert Lansing, Henry Cabot Lodge (1850-1924) William Loeb (1866-1937) , M. O. Lorenze, Alfred Thayer Mahan, John J. Pershing, Franklin D. Roosevelt, Theodore Roosevelt, Francis Bowes Sayre (1865-1972), William L. Sibert, Henry L. Stimson, William H. Taft, Joseph P. Tumulty, and Woodrow Wilson. The correspondence to and from Woodrow Wilson is found in the [Subject File](#) concerning the United States Shipping Board.

## Arrangement of the Papers

This collection is arranged in seven series:

- [Desk Diaries, 1918-1919](#)
- [Family Correspondence, 1890-1927](#)
- [General Correspondence, 1904-1929](#)
- [Subject File, 1908-1929](#)
- [Miscellany, 1908-1947](#)
- [Scrapbooks, 1909-1954](#)
- [Oversize](#)

## Description of Series

<i>Container</i>	<i>Series</i>
BOX 1-2	<b><u>Desk Diaries, 1918-1919</u></b> Daily entries in loose-leaf volumes. Arranged chronologically. <i>Also on negative microfilm, shelf no. 14,006</i>
BOX 3-4	<b><u>Family Correspondence, 1890-1927</u></b> Correspondence between Goethals and his son, George R. Goethals. Arranged chronologically.
BOX 5-41	<b><u>General Correspondence, 1904-1929</u></b> Letters sent and received. Arranged by years and alphabetically therein. An index to the correspondence for the period 1907-1917 is filed at the end of the series.
BOX 42-45	<b><u>Subject File, 1908-1929</u></b> Correspondence, memoranda, reports, maps, blueprints, photocopies, clippings, and printed matter. Arranged by subject.
BOX 46-47	<b><u>Miscellany, 1908-1947</u></b> Memoranda, speeches, invitations, calling cards, maps, blueprints, memorabilia, financial papers, printed matter, clippings, and photographs. Arranged by type of material.
BOX 48-50	<b><u>Scrapbooks, 1909-1954</u></b> Photographs, correspondence, memoranda, and mounted newspaper clippings. No arrangement.
BOX OV 1	<b><u>Oversize</u></b> Scrapbook. Described according to the series and container from which it was removed.

# Container List

<i>Container</i>	<i>Contents</i>
<b>BOX 1-2</b>	<b>Desk Diaries, 1918-1919</b> Daily entries in loose-leaf volumes. Arranged chronologically. <i>Also on negative microfilm, shelf no. 14,006</i>
<b>BOX 1</b>	1918
<b>BOX 2</b>	1919
<b>BOX 3-4</b>	<b>Family Correspondence, 1890-1927</b> Correspondence between Goethals and his son, George R. Goethals. Arranged chronologically.
<b>BOX 3</b>	1890-1915
<b>BOX 4</b>	1916-1927
<b>BOX 5-41</b>	<b>General Correspondence, 1904-1929</b> Letters sent and received. Arranged by years and alphabetically therein. An index to the correspondence for the period 1907-1917 is filed at the end of the series.
<b>BOX 5</b>	1904-1908
<b>BOX 6</b>	1908-1909
<b>BOX 7</b>	1908
<b>BOX 8</b>	1909
<b>BOX 9</b>	1909-1910
<b>BOX 10</b>	1910
<b>BOX 11</b>	1910-1911
<b>BOX 12-13</b>	1911
<b>BOX 14</b>	1911-1912
<b>BOX 15-17</b>	1912
<b>BOX 18-20</b>	1913
<b>BOX 21</b>	1913-1914
<b>BOX 22-26</b>	1914
<b>BOX 27</b>	1914-1915
<b>BOX 28-32</b>	1915
<b>BOX 33-35</b>	1916
<b>BOX 36</b>	1916-1917
<b>BOX 37-39</b>	1917
<b>BOX 40</b>	1917-1929

## General Correspondence, 1904-1929

<i>Container</i>	<i>Contents</i>
BOX 41	Index, 1907-1917
BOX 42-45	<b>Subject File, 1908-1929</b> Correspondence, memoranda, reports, maps, blueprints, photocopies, clippings, and printed matter. Arranged by subject.
BOX 42	Railroads and Eight-Hour Commission, 1910, 1916-1917
BOX 43	United States Shipping Board, 1917-1927
BOX 44	American Academy of Engineers, 1916-1917
BOX 44	Civil Forum Medal of Honor, 1914
BOX 44	Gatun Dam, Panama, 1911
BOX 44	Hall of Fame, 1915
BOX 44	New Orleans Navigation Canal and the Louisiana Engineer Society, 1920-1929
BOX 44	New York Barge Canal, 1908-1911
BOX 45	New York Fuel Administration, 1923
BOX 45	New York water supply, 1916-1917
BOX 46-47	<b>Miscellany, 1908-1947</b> Memoranda, speeches, invitations, calling cards, maps, blueprints, memorabilia, financial papers, printed matter, clippings, and photographs. Arranged by type of material.
BOX 46	General
BOX 46	Maps and blueprints
BOX 46	Memoranda and speeches, 1911-1912, 1947, undated
BOX 46	Photographs, 1908-1913
BOX 46	Printed matter, 1913-1914, 1917
BOX 47	Invitations, calling cards, 1912-1923
BOX 47	Financial papers
BOX 48-50	<b>Scrapbooks, 1909-1954</b> Photographs, correspondence, memoranda, and mounted newspaper clippings. No arrangement.
BOX 48	1928, 1954
BOX 49	1909-1911
BOX 50	1912-1913
BOX 50	1928 <i>See Oversize</i>
BOX OV 1	<b>Oversize</b> Scrapbook. Described according to the series and container from which it was removed.
BOX OV 1	Scrapbooks
BOX OV 1	1928 (Container 50)