


1999

## Portrait of the Panama Canal: Foreward

George R. Goethals

University of Richmond, [ggoethal@richmond.edu](mailto:ggoethal@richmond.edu)

Follow this and additional works at: <http://scholarship.richmond.edu/jepson-faculty-publications>

 Part of the [Diplomatic History Commons](#), [Latin American History Commons](#), and the [Political History Commons](#)

---

### Recommended Citation

Goethals, George R. "Foreward." In *Portrait of the Panama Canal: From Construction to the Twenty-first Century*, by William Friar. Portland, Or.: Graphic Arts Center Pub., 2003.

This Contribution to Book is brought to you for free and open access by the Jepson School of Leadership Studies at UR Scholarship Repository. It has been accepted for inclusion in Jepson School of Leadership Studies articles, book chapters and other publications by an authorized administrator of UR Scholarship Repository. For more information, please contact [scholarshiprepository@richmond.edu](mailto:scholarshiprepository@richmond.edu).

*Portrait of the*  
**Panama Canal**

FROM CONSTRUCTION TO THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

~ Centennial Edition ~

*Text by* WILLIAM FRIAR

~

*Foreword by* GEORGE R. GOETHALS

GRAPHIC ARTS CENTER PUBLISHING®

International Standard Book Number 1-55868-746-7

Library of Congress Catalog Number 99-63186

No part of this book may be copied by any means  
without written permission from the Publisher.

Published by Graphic Arts Center Publishing®

An imprint of Graphic Arts Center Publishing Company

P.O. Box 10306 • Portland, Oregon 97296-0306

503/226-2402 • www.gacpc.com

President • Charles M. Hopkins

Associate Publisher • Douglas A. Pfeiffer

Editorial Staff • Timothy W. Frew, Tricia Brown, Jean Andrews,  
Kathy Howard, Jean Bond-Slaughter

Designer • Robert Reynolds

Production Staff • Richard L. Owsiany, Joanna Goebel

Book Manufacturing • Lincoln & Allen Company

Printed and Bound in the United States of America

Third edition—Celebrating the Centennial of the Panama Canal



◁ ◁ A PANAMAX ship, the largest type of vessel normally transiting the Canal, moves through Gaillard Cut. The Cut was widened in 2001 so these huge ships could pass when traveling in opposite directions. △ Sandy beaches beckon.

Text © MCMXCVI and MMIII by William Friar

Foreword © MCMXCIX by George R. Goethals

Canal Map page 12-13 & Map of Panama page 13  
by Eureka Cartography

Front and back cover photographs are courtesy of the Panama  
Canal Authority

World Map page 7 & Profile Map page 12\*

Photographs pages 5 & 23 from Panama Canal archives\*

Photograph page 30 © by Panama Stock Photo / Fran Casey, Jr.

Photographs pages 18, 32, & 71 © MCMXCVI by Maxine Cass

Photographs pages 19, 64, & 79 by Jaime Fernandez\*

Photograph page 9 © MMIII by William Friar

Photographs pages 16, 17, 27, 28, 30, 34, 35, 36-37, 39, 40-41,  
42, 50, 59, 62, 63, 65, 66, & 75 by Don Goode\*

Photographs pages 44-45, 46, & 56-57

by Armando de Gracia\*

Photographs pages i, ii, iii, iv, 1, 6, 20-21, 25, 26, & 31

by Ernest "Red" Hallen\*

Photograph page 51 © La Presse/Tito Herrera

Photographs pages 67 & 78 © MCMXCVI by Dave G. Houser

Photograph page 22 © by Larry Hauser

Photographs pages 11, 24, 29, 33, 38, 43\*, 48, 49, 68-69, 70,  
& 74 © by Kevin Jenkins

Photographs pages 2, 8, 43, 47, 52-53, 58, 60-62, 76-77, &  
80 by Kevin Jenkins\*

Photograph page 15 by Melvin Kennedy\*

Photographs pages 48 & 49 © MCMXCVI by Harvey Lloyd

Photographs pages 10, 54, & 55

© MCMXCVI by Vanessa A. Puniak

Photograph pages 4 © MCMXCVI by James C. Simmons

Photograph page 14 photographer unknown\*

Photograph pages 72-73 by Jaime Yau,

Courtesy of the Panama Canal Authority

\*Courtesy of the Panama Canal Commission

## Foreword

A 1913 edition of the British magazine *Puck* features a two-page, full-color cartoon depicting Uncle Sam astride the Isthmus of Panama and the nearly completed Panama Canal. The cartoon also shows the pyramids of Egypt, the hanging gardens of Babylon, and other familiar human creations. Its caption reads, "The seven wonders of the world salute the eighty." Cradled in Uncle Sam's arm is a figure, a saluting, white-haired, white-suited mustachioed man with the name "Goethals" printed on his collar. This is my great-grandfather, chief engineer of the Panama Canal.

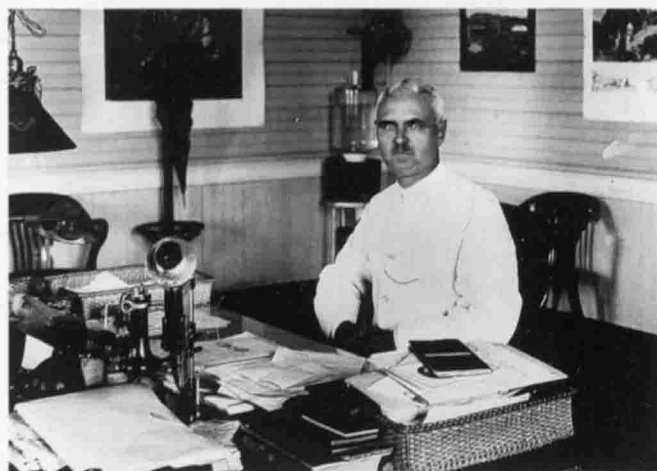
Though my proud reaction to this cartoon is nepotistic, and not everyone shares the cartoon's unabashed jingoistic sentiments, few would quarrel with hailing the Panama Canal as a wonder of the world.

Built at the beginning of the twentieth century, the Canal has become a vital link in the global economy of the twenty-first. The environmental and social disruptions caused by its construction long behind us, the Canal exists in harmony with the fragile rain forest ecosystem of the Isthmus. While there were many changes in the Canal and its operations through the years, much of the Canal uses original equipment. The locks, the gates, the dams, and the breakwaters were built to last by very smart people.

While visiting and transiting the Canal are the only ways of absorbing its full majesty, beauty, and significance, William Friar's remarkable *Portrait of the Panama Canal* provides an unusually thorough and faithful perspective on the Canal as it paints a compelling portrait of the skill and sacrifice of those who built and have operated this crucial waterway.

This is a personal book as well as an account of an engineering and economic marvel. William Friar makes clear his own attachment to the former Canal Zone and the Canal itself. My attachments are personal as well. On my first trip to Panama in 1996, William Friar's mother, Willie K. Friar, the now-retired director of public affairs for the Panama Canal Commission, encouraged me to explore the workings of the Canal in great detail. I saw the lock gate operations through the eyes of the men and women running them every day. I am grateful to Ms. Friar for helping me make a connection to an important piece of family history.

Upon seeing the Canal, I was reminded of the first time I understood that my great-grandfather had accomplished something significant in a faraway place. In Vineyard Haven, Massachusetts, where I grew up, directly across from the elementary school stands the General George W. Goethals American Legion Post. Early in my kindergarten year, a friend led me across the street to climb the trees in front of the legion hall. Later, a teacher scolded us, saying the trees belonged to George W. Goethals and that we had no business on them. When he asked me my name and I said George Goethals, the roomful of students howled with laughter and the teacher looked most displeased. That is all I remember from this frightening experience. But it did lead me to learn more about my famous forebear.



△ The Panama Canal actually opened six months ahead of schedule and under budget. The credit for this belongs to George W. Goethals, who was the chief engineer of the Canal during the last seven years of its construction.

For decades my curiosity about the Canal went unsatisfied. When I finally experienced the Canal, I was awestruck by its genius and its significance. William Friar's *Portrait of the Panama Canal*, revised to recognize the historic transfer of Canal operations to the Republic of Panama, offers an enticing preview of the Canal for those who plan to visit Panama, and a souvenir for those who have experienced it. I am delighted to welcome you to Friar's *Portrait* and to share my enthusiasm for this marvelous achievement of the human spirit.

—George R. Goethals,  
Williamstown, Massachusetts, May 12, 1999