

William Crawford Gorgas Papers

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<http://lcn.loc.gov/mm78023143>

Prepared by Manuscript Division Staff

Collection Summary

Title: William Crawford Gorgas Papers

Span Dates: 1857-1919

Bulk Dates: (bulk 1904-1913)

ID No.: MSS23143

Creator: Gorgas, William Crawford, 1853-1920

Extent: 12,000 items ; 39 containers ; 16 linear feet

Language: Collection material in English

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

Summary: Army medical officer. Correspondence, reports, addresses, articles, financial and miscellaneous records, medical papers, charts, clippings, photographs, and printed material dealing primarily with the fight against yellow fever in Cuba and Panama.

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

Barbour, Thomas, 1884-1946--Correspondence.
Bevans, James L. (James Lung), 1869-1944--Correspondence.
Bowles, James Ten Broeck--Correspondence.
Carter, Henry Rose, 1852-1925--Correspondence.
Doughty, William M. (William McDowell), 1881-1944--Correspondence.
Ferris, F. A. (Frank A.), -1918--Correspondence.
Finlay, Carlos Juan, 1833-1915--Correspondence.
Gorgas family--Correspondence.
Gorgas, Josiah, 1818-1883. Josiah Gorgas diary.
Gorgas, William Crawford, 1854-1920.
Guiteras, John, 1852-1925--Correspondence.
Keen, William W. (William Williams), 1837-1932--Correspondence.
McCulloch, C. C. (Champe Carter), 1869-1928--Correspondence.
Mitchell, S. Weir (Silas Weir), 1829-1914--Correspondence.
Plummer, G. R. (George R.)--Correspondence.
Schilling, Claus Karl, 1871-1946--Correspondence.
Sternberg, George Miller, 1838-1915--Correspondence.
Stevens, George T. (George Thomas), 1832-1921--Correspondence.

Organizations

Confederate States of America. Army--Officers.
Rockefeller Foundation. Yellow Fever Commission.
United States. Army--Medical care.
United States. Army--Surgeons.

Subjects

Medicine--Cuba.
Medicine--Florida.
Medicine--Latin America.
Medicine--Panama.
Public health--Cuba.
Public health--Florida.
Public health--Latin America.
Public health--Panama.
Reconstruction (U.S. history, 1865-1877)

Yellow fever--Cuba.
Yellow fever--Florida.
Yellow fever--Latin America.
Yellow fever--Panama.

Places

Southern States--History--1865-1877.
United States--History--1865-1898.
United States--History--Civil War, 1861-1865.

Occupations

Army officers.
Physicians.

Administrative Information

Provenance

The papers of William Crawford Gorgas, army medical officer, were deposited in the Library of Congress by Mrs. William Gorgas in 1921 and converted to a gift by Aileen G. Wrightson in 1947.

Processing History

The papers of William Crawford Gorgas were processed in 1961. The finding aid was revised in 2013.

Copyright Status

The status of copyright in the unpublished writings of William Crawford Gorgas is governed by the Copyright Law of the United States (Title 17, U.S.C.).

Access and Restrictions

The papers of William Crawford Gorgas 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.

Preferred Citation

Researchers wishing to cite this collection should include the following information: Container number, William Crawford Gorgas Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Biographical Note

<i>Date</i>	<i>Event</i>
1854, Oct. 3	Born, Mobile, Ala.
1875	Graduated, University of the South, Sewanee, Tenn.
1879	Awarded doctor of medicine degree, Bellevue Hospital Medical College of New York, New York, N.Y.
1880	Commissioned lieutenant, United States Army Medical Corps and assigned to duty in Texas
1885	Promoted to captain

1888	Transferred from Fort Randall, N.Dak., to Fort Barrancas, Fla., to aid in control of yellow fever epidemic
1898	Promoted to major Appointed medical officer in Cuba during Spanish-American War
1899	Assumed duties as sanitation officer of Havana, Cuba, with American occupation forces
1903	Promoted to colonel in recognition for services in Cuba
1904	Appointed chief sanitation officer of the Panama Canal Zone during period of canal construction
1907	Named member of Isthmian Canal Commission
1914	Appointed surgeon general of United States Army with rank of brigadier general
1915	Promoted to major general
1916	Chief of Yellow Fever Commission, Rockefeller Foundation
1918	Official retirement from United States Army
1920, July 4	Died, London, England; buried in Arlington Cemetery

Scope and Content Note

The papers of William C. Gorgas (1853-1920) relate mainly to his work combating yellow fever in Florida and Latin America, particularly Cuba, and Panama. The collection spans the years 1857-1919, with the bulk of the material concentrated in the period 1904-1913. Included are correspondence, reports, addresses, articles, financial and miscellaneous records, medical papers, charts, clippings, photographs, and printed material organized into seven series: [General Correspondence and Other Papers](#); [Subject File](#); [Addresses, Articles, and Reports](#); [Account Books](#); [Medical Papers](#); [Miscellany](#); and [Photographs](#).

The chronological file of the [General Correspondence and Other Papers](#) series contains many items of a routine nature. Prior to 1904 the documentation is largely miscellaneous in nature including personal account books and medical papers relating to patients and yellow fever as well as some family, military, and business correspondence. Following 1913, Gorgas's activities are represented by a minimum of correspondence, a few miscellaneous subject folders, and a small group of papers used to prepare a report on Latin America by the Rockefeller Foundation's Yellow Fever Commission of 1916. There is no material covering his activities as surgeon general of the United States Army.

Rounding out the collection are drafts and reprints of speeches, articles, reports, miscellaneous printed matter, and photographs of Gorgas and scenes of Cuba, Mexico, Panama, and the United States. Included in the [Miscellany](#) series are extracts of a journal of Josiah Gorgas (1818-1883) that chronicles the Civil War and Reconstruction from the perspective of a Confederate officer who served on the headquarters staff and during the Appomattox Campaign.

The papers contain correspondence of a routine nature with many prominent physicians, sanitary engineers, military officers, federal officials, and United States congressmen. Correspondents include James L. Bevans, James Ten Broeck Bowles, Thomas Barbour, Henry Rose Carter, William M. Doughty, F. A. Ferris, Carlos Juan Finlay, John Guiteras, William W. Keen, C. C. McCulloch, Jr., S. Weir Mitchell, G. R. Plummer, Claus Karl Schilling, George T. Stevens, and George Miller Sternberg.

Arrangement of the Papers

This collection is arranged in seven series:

- General Correspondence and Other Papers, 1885-1919
- Subject File, 1880-1918
- Addresses, Articles, and Reports, 1901-1912
- Account Books, 1881-1910
- Medical Papers, 1894-1901
- Miscellany, 1857-1903
- Photographs, 1900-1913

Description of Series

<i>Container</i>	<i>Series</i>
BOX 1-23	<u>General Correspondence and Other Papers, 1885-1919</u>
BOX 1-6	<u>Chronological File, 1885-1919</u> Family, business, and military correspondence with notes, reports, invitations, and programs. Arranged chronologically.
BOX 7-23	<u>Alphabetical File, 1904-1913</u> Personal letters and other papers sent and received as Sanitary Officer of the Panama Canal Zone. Arranged alphabetically by name of correspondent or subject. A card index precedes the file.
BOX 24-29A	<u>Subject File, 1880-1918</u> Reports, memoranda, correspondence, charts, patient records, and mounted clippings. Arranged according to topic or type of material.
BOX 30	<u>Addresses, Articles, and Reports, 1901-1912</u> Drafts and final copies of speeches, writings, and reports. Arranged chronologically.
BOX 31	<u>Account Books, 1881-1910</u> Personal and household account books. Arranged chronologically.
BOX 32-34	<u>Medical Papers, 1894-1901</u> Lists and miscellaneous medical record books. Arranged chronologically.
BOX 35	<u>Miscellany, 1857-1903</u> Printed matter and general miscellany. Arranged by type of material.
BOX 36-38	<u>Photographs, 1900-1913</u> Positive photographic prints of Gorgas, friends, and places he visited. Arranged by topic.

Container List

<i>Container</i>	<i>Contents</i>
BOX 1-23	General Correspondence and Other Papers, 1885-1919
BOX 1-6	Chronological File, 1885-1919 Family, business, and military correspondence with notes, reports, invitations, and programs. Arranged chronologically.
BOX 1	1885, Sept.-1894
BOX 2	1894, Oct.-1899, Aug.
BOX 3	1899, Sept.-1901, Dec. 10
BOX 4	1901, Dec.-1902, Apr. 30
BOX 5	1902, May 19-Aug. 27
BOX 6	1902, Aug. 28-1919
BOX 7-23	Alphabetical File, 1904-1913 Personal letters and other papers sent and received as Sanitary Officer of the Panama Canal Zone. Arranged alphabetically by name of correspondent or subject. A card index precedes the file.
BOX 7	Index
BOX 8	Adamson-Bass
BOX 9	Bastedo-Carbejal
BOX 10	Carbo-Davis, O. F.
BOX 11	Davis, T. A.-Faget
BOX 12	Fairchild-Grunsky
BOX 13	Guayaquil-Hillsman
BOX 14	Hobson-Jastron
BOX 15	Jennings-Los Santos
BOX 16	Loud-Mayo
BOX 17	Mears-Murphy Mfg. Co.
BOX 18	Murphy, Orr-Panamenian
BOX 19	Pan-American-Reno
BOX 20	Reprints-Skinner
BOX 21	Slaughter-Stevens, F. C.
BOX 22	Stevens, G. T.-Warren
BOX 23	Warriner-Zalinski
BOX 24-29A	Subject File, 1880-1918 Reports, memoranda, correspondence, charts, patient records, and mounted clippings. Arranged according to topic or type of material.
BOX 24	Medical Corps at Vladivostok, Siberia; Panama Canal; United States Ambulance Section in Genoa, Italy, 1918
BOX 25	Yellow fever report, discussion of and report on USS <i>Plymouth</i> , 1878-1879
BOX 25	Yellow Fever Commission, 1916
BOX 25	Yellow fever
BOX 25	Miscellaneous

Subject File, 1880-1918

Container

Contents

BOX 25	Gorgas's cases, 1899-1900
BOX 26-28	Patient charts, 1900
BOX 29-29A	Scrapbooks of newspaper clippings, 1900, Oct. 26-1902, May 6
BOX 30	Addresses, Articles, and Reports, 1901-1912 Drafts and final copies of speeches, writings, and reports. Arranged chronologically.
BOX	1901-1912, undated
BOX 31	Account Books, 1881-1910 Personal and household account books. Arranged chronologically.
BOX 31	Notebook, 1881-1887
BOX 31	Account book
BOX 31	1880, Jan.-1910, June
BOX 31	1887, Feb.7-1897, Sept.
BOX 32-34	Medical Papers, 1894-1901 Lists and miscellaneous medical record books. Arranged chronologically.
BOX 32	Visiting lists, Fort Barrancas, Fla. 1894-1896
BOX 32	Medical history of patients treated by Gorgas, 1890-1897
BOX 33	Copies of special cases, studies, and reports, 1880-1897
BOX 33	Disbursement and register book, Post Hospital, Fort Reno, Indian Territory, 1883-1897
BOX 33	Medical disbursement book, Havana, Cuba, 1899-1902
BOX 33	Reports of vital statistics, Havana, Cuba, 1899-1901
BOX 34	Medical lists, Camp Voorhees, N.J., 2nd, 3rd, and 6th Regiments, 1898
BOX 35	Miscellany, 1857-1903 Printed matter and general miscellany. Arranged by type of material.
BOX 35	Printed matter
BOX 35	Senate bills and reports
BOX 35	Samples of forms and circulars used by the sanitary officer of Havana, Cuba
BOX 35	<i>Catastro de la Propiedad</i>
BOX 35	Notes to self, circa 1901-1903
BOX 35	Journal of Josiah Gorgas, typed extracts from ordnance notes, biography by T. L. Bayne, 1857-1877
BOX 36-38	Photographs, 1900-1913 Positive photographic prints of Gorgas, friends, and places he visited. Arranged by topic.
BOX 36	Gorgas, William Crawford
BOX 36	People
BOX 36	Scenes
BOX 36	Cuba
BOX 37	Cuba
BOX 37	Mexico

Photographs, 1900-1913

Container

Contents

BOX 37	Panama, including personal album
BOX 38	United States
BOX 38	Miscellaneous postcards