

# Philippe Bunau-Varilla Papers

A Finding Aid to the Collection in the  
Library of Congress

Prepared by Manuscript Division Staff



Manuscript Division, Library of  
Congress

Washington, D.C.

2011

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

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# Collection Summary

Title: Philippe Bunau-Varilla Papers

Span Dates: 1877-1955

Bulk Dates: (bulk 1900-1907)

ID No.: MSS14316

Creator: Bunau-Varilla, Philippe, 1859-1940

Extent: 10,000 items; 41 containers; 14 linear feet

Language: Collection material in French and English

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

Abstract: Panamanian diplomat and engineer. Correspondence, speeches, writings, legal records, newspaper clippings, and other papers concerning Bunau-Varilla's activities in the United States, his efforts to gain support for completion of the Panama Canal, and his role in the Panamanian revolution and as minister plenipotentiary for the new government.

## 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

Bigelow, John, 1817-1911--Correspondence.

Burton, Theodore E. (Theodore Elijah), 1851-1929--Correspondence.

Eiffel, Gustave, 1832-1923--Correspondence.

Gorgas, William Crawford, 1854-1920--Correspondence.

Hanna, Marcus Alonzo, 1837-1904--Correspondence.

Hay, John, 1838-1905--Correspondence.

Hay, John, 1838-1905.

Jusserand, J. J. (Jean Jules), 1855-1932--Correspondence.

Lesseps, Ferdinand de, 1805-1894--Correspondence.

Lodge, Henry Cabot, 1850-1924--Correspondence.

Roosevelt, Theodore, 1858-1919--Correspondence.

### Organizations

Panama. Treaties, etc. United States, 1903 Nov. 18.

### Subjects

Canals, Interoceanic.

Diplomatic and consular service, Panamanian--United States.

Volcanoes--Nicaragua.

### Places

Panama Canal (Panama)

Panama--Foreign relations--United States.

Panama--History--Revolution, 1903.

Panama--Politics and government--1903-1946.

United States--Foreign relations--Panama.

### Occupations

Diplomats--Panama.

Engineers.

# Administrative Information

## Provenance

The papers of Philippe Bunau-Varilla, Panamanian diplomat and engineer, were given to the Library of Congress by Bunau-Varilla in 1938 and by his son, Etienne Bunau-Varilla, in 1947. Additional items were given by Charles Moore, Miles P. Duval, R. W. Hebard, and others, 1940-1979.

## Processing History

The papers of Philippe Bunau-Varilla were arranged and described in 1984. The finding aid was revised in 2011.

## Copyright Status

The status of copyright in the unpublished writings of Philippe Bunau-Varilla is governed by the Copyright Law of the United States (Title 17, U.S.C.).

## Access and Restrictions

The papers of Philippe Bunau-Varilla 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, Philippe Bunau-Varilla Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

# Biographical Note

<i>Date</i>	<i>Event</i>
1859, July 26	Born, Paris, France
1880	Graduated, École Polytechnique, Paris, France
1884	Left the French government to go to Panama as chief engineer of the three sections of the canal
1885	Chief engineer, French Transoceanic Co. of Panama under Ferdinand de Lesseps
1888-1902	Published, lectured, and negotiated in France and the United States in an effort to gain support for the completion of the Panama Canal
1903	Named minister plenipotentiary to Washington by the new Panama government; negotiated the Hay-Bunau-Varilla Treaty, which gave the United States control of the Canal Zone
1916	Devised a new system for water purification
1940, May 18	Died, Paris, France

## Scope and Content Note

The papers of Philippe Bunau-Varilla (1859-1940) span the period 1877-1955, with the bulk of the material relating to his activities in the United States, 1900-1907, and to his role in the Panamanian revolution and as minister plenipotentiary for the new government. The collection includes correspondence, speeches, writings, legal records, newspaper clippings, and other papers, much of which is in French. The papers are organized in six series: [General Correspondence](#), [Speech, Article, and Book File](#), [Legal File](#), [Miscellany](#), [Newspaper Clippings](#), and [Addition](#).

The papers contain material relating to the revolution in Panama, items concerning the Hay-Bunau-Varilla Treaty, including documents selected and annotated by Bunau-Varilla, and a note with a postal stamp illustrating volcanic activity sent from the Republic of Nicaragua to members of Congress in June 1902.

Correspondents include John Bigelow, Ferdinand de Lesseps, Henry Cabot Lodge (1850-1924), Theodore Roosevelt, Mark Hanna, John Hay, William Crawford Gorgas, Alexandre Gustave Eiffel, Theodore E. Burton, J. J. Jusserand, and Manuel Amador Guerrero.

## Arrangement of the Papers

This collection is arranged in six series:

- [General Correspondence, 1880-1940](#)
- [Speech, Article, and Book File, 1900-1938](#)
- [Legal File, 1880-1910](#)
- [Miscellany, 1895-1955](#)
- [Newspaper Clippings, 1891-1914](#)
- [Addition, 1877-1938](#)

## Description of Series

<i>Container</i>	<i>Series</i>
BOX 1-13	<u>General Correspondence, 1880-1940</u> Letters sent and received. Arranged chronologically.
BOX 14-17	<u>Speech, Article, and Book File, 1900-1938</u> Drafts, typescripts, notes, and miscellaneous material relating to Bunau-Varilla's speeches and writings. Arranged by type of material.
BOX 18-21	<u>Legal File, 1880-1910</u> Legal records and miscellaneous material. Arranged by subject.
BOX 22-23	<u>Miscellany, 1895-1955</u> Printed matter, biographical material, drawings, calling cards, invitations, notes, bills, and miscellaneous items. Arranged by type of material.
BOX 24-40	<u>Newspaper Clippings, 1891-1914</u> Newspaper clippings. Arranged chronologically.
BOX 41	<u>Addition, 1877-1938</u> Correspondence, printed matter, newspaper clippings, and miscellaneous material. Arranged alphabetically by type of material.

# Container List

<i>Container</i>	<i>Contents</i>
BOX 1-13	General Correspondence, 1880-1940 Letters sent and received. Arranged chronologically.
BOX 1	1880-1900 (21 folders)
BOX 2	1901
BOX 2	Jan.-May 6 (folders)
BOX 3	May-Dec. (10 folders)
BOX 4	1902
BOX 4	Jan.-May (9 folders)
BOX 5	June-Dec. (8 folders)
BOX 6	1903, Oct.-Nov. (7 folders)
BOX 7	1903, Dec.-1904, Jan. (6 folders)
BOX 8	1904, Feb.-Sept. (10 folders)
BOX 9	1904, Oct.-1905, Mar. (7 folders)
BOX 10	1905, Apr.-Dec. (8 folders)
BOX 11	1906
BOX 11	Jan.-June 15 (6 folders)
BOX 12	June 16-Dec. (8 folders)
BOX 13	1907-1940 (19 folders)
BOX 14-17	Speech, Article, and Book File, 1900-1938 Drafts, typescripts, notes, and miscellaneous material relating to Bunau-Varilla's speeches and writings. Arranged by type of material.
BOX 14	Books and writings
BOX 14	<i>Panama, la Création, la Destruction, la Résurrection</i> , draft
BOX 15	<i>De Panama à Verdun</i> , typescript
BOX 15	<i>Panama, le Passé, le Présent, l'Avenir</i>

## Speech, Article, and Book File, 1900-1938

<i>Container</i>	<i>Contents</i>
BOX 15	"Comparative Characteristics of Panama and Nicaragua"
BOX 16-17	Articles and lectures concerning the Panama Canal
BOX 18-21	Legal File, 1880-1910 Legal records and miscellaneous material. Arranged by subject.
BOX 18	French Panama canal companies
BOX 18-19	<i>New York Evening Post</i> , libel suit
BOX 20-21	Arbitration between Sullivan & Cromwell and La Compagnie Nouvelle du Canal de Panama
BOX 22-23	Miscellany, 1895-1955 Printed matter, biographical material, drawings, calling cards, invitations, notes, bills, and miscellaneous items. Arranged by type of material.
BOX 22	Printed matter concerning Bunau-Varilla and the Panama Canal
BOX 23	Biographical material; Hay-Bunau-Varilla Treaty; drawings and descriptions of machinery; calling cards; unidentified manuscripts; and notes, bills, fragments, and invitations
BOX 24-40	Newspaper Clippings, 1891-1914 Newspaper clippings. Arranged chronologically.
BOX 24	1891-1901
BOX 25	1901-1902
BOX 26	1903-1905
BOX 27-28	1905
BOX 29	1905-1906
BOX 30	1906
BOX 31	1906-1907
BOX 32	1907
BOX 33-34	1909
BOX 35	1910
BOX 36	1911
BOX 37	1912
BOX 38	1913
BOX 39	1914
BOX 39	Clippings concerning the Panama Canal
BOX 39	Clippings concerning United States-Japanese relations, 1906
BOX 41	Addition, 1877-1938 Correspondence, printed matter, newspaper clippings, and miscellaneous material. Arranged alphabetically by type of material.

Addition, 1877-1938

*Container*

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BOX 41	General correspondence, 1877-1938, undated (6 folders)
BOX 41	Miscellany
BOX 41	General
BOX 41	<i>Les 19 Documents Clés du Drame de Panama</i>
BOX 41	<i>Le Sauvetage du Canal de Panama</i>
BOX 41	<i>De Panama à Verdun</i>
BOX 41	<i>Panama, la Creation, la Destruction, la Resurrection</i>
BOX 41	Newspaper clippings