



MUSEO AFROANTILLANO  
DE PANAMÁ

ISTHMIAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
COMPETITION FOR THE BEST TRUE STORIES  
OF LIFE AND WORK ON THE ISTHMIAN OF PANAMA  
DURING THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE PANAMA CANAL

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## THE CONTEST

In 1963, as the 50th anniversary of the opening of the Panama Canal drew near, the Isthmian Historical Society decided to make a collection of stories of personal experiences of non-U.S. citizens during Construction Days by means of a contest. This contest was publicized in local newspapers, by notices in the food packages given to Disability Relief recipients, and in newspapers in the Caribbean area.

The following letter was sent to a total of 15 newspapers in Jamaica, Barbados, British Honduras, Trinidad, Antigua, St. Vincent, St. Lucia, and Grenada:

"The Isthmian Historical Society is trying to collect the personal experiences and viewpoints of those West Indians who served in the labor force that dug the Panama Canal. Very little has been written by them or about them. Soon it will be too late to obtain personal accounts. In the hope of making a permanent record of their experiences during the construction of the Canal, our Society is sponsoring a competition for the best true stories of life and work on the Isthmus of Panama during the construction years. It would be much appreciated if you would assist us in publicizing our competition. I am enclosing a separate sheet with the information for this."

The information sheet: "The Isthmian Historical Society announces a competition for the best true stories of life and work on the Isthmus of Panama during the construction of the Panama Canal. The competition is open to West Indians and other non-U.S. citizens who were on the Isthmus prior to 1915.

Entries may be handwritten but must be legible. Anyone who is infirm may have his story written for him by someone else, but in this case it must be stated on the entry that it has been written for him in his own words by someone else. Give name, address, year arrived in Panama, where employed there, and type of work done.

All entries must be in the mail by November 1, 1963. The winners will be announced in December. All entries become the property of the Isthmian Historical Society. First prize will be: \$50 (U.S.); second prize: \$30 (U.S.); third prize: "\$20 (U.S.). ..."

Brief notices of the contest were placed in several thousand food packages ("Food for Peace" packages have been distributed monthly by the Panama Canal Company-Canal Zone Government). These notices read:

"COMPETITION -- For West Indians & other non-U.S. citizens who worked on the Isthmus before 1915. For the best true stories of life & work on the Isthmus during the Canal construction there will be awarded prizes: 1st PRIZE: \$50; .... Give year arrived in Panama, kind of work & where, name & address. Write of interesting experiences & people, living & working conditions, etc. ...."

### THE ENTRIES

The majority of the contest entries were handwritten. In some cases the handwriting was difficult to read. In making copies of the entries, it occasionally was necessary to omit an undecipherable word, leaving a blank space to indicate the omission. Although an effort was made to reproduce the letters exactly as they were written, it is probable that there are errors. However, they will detract little from <sup>what</sup> these Old Timers wanted to say.

It should be remembered that these letters were written by individuals who labored on the Isthmus prior to 1915. They are no longer young. Some are handicapped by the infirmities of age: failing eyesight, unsteady and arthritic hands that find it laborious to form words and sentences, and minds that know what they want to say but communicate it imperfectly. Generally, unfamiliar spellings need only to be sounded and their meaning becomes clear. In cases where the entrants wrote as they speak, there may be dropped "H"s so that "has" is written "as". Other features of West Indian speech will be noted. As spoken language, there is no English more colorful. Mr. Albert Banister's interesting letter is a good example.

The Society is most grateful for all the entries and we regret that there could not be a prize for everyone.

Ruth C. Stuhl  
Competition Editor

252 p. of text  
of including  
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## CONTEST ENTRANTS

- 4 Peters, Albert; 1st prize; born Nassau, Bahamas; arrived 1906.
- 7 Martin, George H.; 2nd prize; Barbados; 1909.
- 10 Suazo, Alfonso; 3rd prize; Honduras; 1902.
  
- 1 Alexander, Arnold N.; ?; 1909.
- 1 Alleyne, Herbert; ?; 1908.
- 1 Allick, Helon I.; Trinidad; 1913.
- 1 Archbold, Hendrix H.; Old Providence, Colombia; 1907.
- ✓ 1 Ashby, James; ?; 1909.
- ✓ 5 Austin, Harrigan; ?; 1905. ✓
- 5 Banister, Albert; St. Lucia; 1914?
- 11 Beckford, Reginald; Colon.
- 1 Beckles, Wesley; ?; 1913.
- 3 Belgrave, Allan C.; ?; 1905.
- 3 Berisford, G. Mitchell; Barbados; 1909.
- 1 Booth, Charles; ?; 1911.
- 7 Bowen, Samuel N.; Barbados; 1907.
- 1 Boyce, Clemen6 C.; ?; 1909.
- 1 Bramble, Manley; ?
- ✓ 2 Brewster, Joseph; Barbados; 1906.
- 2 Brown, Lessep C.; Panama.
- 1 Brownie, Norton; ?; 1906.
- 1 Bunting, Isaiah; ?; 1910.
- 1 Burton, Eutace; ?; 1899.
- 5 Butcher, John Oswald; Barbados; 1906.
- 1 Cadogan, Samuel; ?
- 2 Carmichael, Leslie; ?; 1907.
- 1 Carr, Handel; ?; 1911?
- 2 Chambers, Robert T.; Jamaica; 1913.
- 1 Chase, Leonard A.; ?; 1906.
- 1 Citronello, St. Justo F.; ?; 1907.
- 4 Clarke, Aaron; ?; 1906.
- 3 Clarke, Amos E.; Panama.
- 1 Clarke, Samuel; ?; 1909.
- 1 Clarke, Wesley; ?; 1911/
- 4 Clayton, H. B.; Gorgona.
- 1 Connell, James G.; Barbados; 1906.
- 1 Couloote, Mrs. Mary; St. Lucia; 1903.
- 1 Daniels, Robert S.; ?; 1906.
- 2 De la Rosa, Isaias Antioco; ?
- 1 Doglass, Bersfored; ?; 1906.
- 2 Dottin, Alfred E.; ?; 1909.
- 2 Douglas, Nehemiah E.; Jamaica; 1911.

- 1 Finn, Enos Augustus; ?; 1905.
- ✓ 2 Forde, Rufus Edward; Trinidad; 1910.
- 1 Fox, Joseph H.; ?; 1910.
- ✓ 1 Garcia, Francisco; Panama.
- ✓ 2 Gard, Joseph H.; Barbados; 1906.
- 2 Garner, John; Barbados; 1908.
- 1 George, Augustus; ?; 1911.
- 1 Gittens, Thomas B.; Barbados; 1905.
- 1 Green, Prince George; ?; 1909?
- 1 Harnais, Bertrand Emilien; ?; 1905.
- ✓ 1 Headley, Mrs. Albertha; ?
- 1 Hermon, Peter; Barbados; 1905.
- 1 Hibbert, Isaiah N.; ?; 1911.
- 5 Hodges, George; ?; 1906.
- 3 Holder, Everton M.; ?; 1905.
- 1 Holligan, John A.; Barbados; 1906.
- 1 Hughes, Joseph Theophilus; ?; 1906.
- 1 Hunt, Clifford; ?; 1906.
- 2 Hussey, Brandt; Jamaica; 1909.
- 2 James, Frederick; Antigua; 1907.
- 1 Joseph, Jacob; Antigua; 1909.
- 2 Kavanagh, Lancelot A.; Jamaica; 1905.
- 5 Lawson, Daniel T.; Jamaica; 1906.
- 1 Leacock, Joseph; Barbados; 1906.
- 7 LeCurrieux, Jules E.; Barbados; 1906.
- 2 Lewis, James A.; Antigua; 1906.
- 3 Lucas, Rufus C.; Jamaica; 1913.
- 1 Lunche, Ange Julienne; Martinique; 1906.
- ✓ 7 McDonald, Philip; Grenada; 1908.
- 1 McEennis, Luther; ?; 1904.
- 2 McKenzie, Z. H.; Jamaica; 1906.
- 1 Mark, John Thomas; ?; 1907.
- 1 Marshall, Joshua; ?; 1909.
- ✓ 4 Martineau, E. W.; Grenada; 1912.
- 1 Maynard, Manassah; ?; 1905.
- 1 Merchant, J. T.; ?; 1910.
- 2 Mitchell, Alfred; Jamaica; 1904.
- 1 Moore, John A.; ?; 1914.
- 1 Morgan, George W.; Jamaica; 1906.
- 1 Morgan, John; ?; 1912.
- 1 Moses, Charles; St. Lucia; 1904.
- 1 Paily, Henry; ?; 1905.
- 2 Parkinson, Constantine; Panama.
- 1 Parke, Amos; Barbados; 1914.

- 2 Peters, George; Dominica, B.W.I.; 1908.
- 7 Phillips, Arthur E.; ?; 1912.
- 5 Plummer, Enrique; Gorgona.
- 2 Prescod, John F.; Barbados; 1906.
- 1 Richards, John Altyman; Jamaica; 1914.
- 5 Riley, T. H.; ?; 1909.
- 7 Robinson, Samuel A.; ?
- 1 Rodrigues, Nicolas; ?
- 2 Rouse, Joseph; ?; 1905.
- 1 Ruiz, Obdulio; ?; 1910.
- 1 Sailsman, Philip Millerd; Jamaica; 1910.
- 2 St. John, Clifford; Barbados; 1905.
- 1 Sanchez, Silvero; ?; 1908.
- 9 Simmons, Edgar Llewellyn; Barbados; 1908.
- 7 Smith, Samuel A.; Jamaica; 1912.
- 7 Smith, James F.; ?; 1906.
- 3 Thomas, Charles M.; St. Lucia; 1913.
- 2 Thomas, Donald M.; ?
- 1 Thomas, Fitz H.; Barbados; 1905.
- 4 Waisome, Jeremiah; Bluefields, Nicaragua; 1895 or 1896.
- 2 Webb, Samuel; St. Vincent; 1907.
- 2 Weeks, Castilla M.; ?; 1906.
- 1 West, Alonzo F.; ?; 1912.
- 1 Wheatley, Simeon T.; ?; 1907.
- 3 White, Edward Adolphus; Jamaica; 1911.
- 4 Williams, James A.; Jamaica; 1910.

## NOTES

Bodega - storehouse or storeroom.

Brass, brass check - a piece of brass bearing an identification number.

Deads - bodies, dead persons.

Disability Relief retiree - Most of the non-U.S. citizens who worked during the construction years were not eligible for U.S. Government pensions. The U.S. Congress would not appropriate funds for this purpose but eventually did provide for a system of relief payments for those disabled while employed. This in practice means that those old workers not eligible for a regular pension became eligible for the disability relief payments by signing a statement at the time of their retirement saying that they had become disabled. As of June, 1964, the maximum monthly payment was \$55 and many receive less.

Gold & Silver - "Gold" designated American (or, generally, white) employees; "Silver" designated non-Americans (or, generally, colored employees).

Land license - For a number of years the Canal Zone authorities permitted employees and retired employees to use certain unused lands for residence and/or cultivation. A license was issued for each piece of land so used and it was common to refer to the land itself as a "land license."

Scarfle, scuffle - scaffold.

Stransfor - transfer.

Torra, toara, etc. - Toro Point.

Austin: p.2 - The doctors & nurses perhaps lacked tropical experience but were qualified in their professions.

p.3 - "railroad tiles" - ties.

p.4 - "gates" - gates of the canal locks.

Banister: "Colored Americans, etc." - Actually, it was felt that to bring large numbers of American Negro laborers to Panama would create a labor problem in the southern U.S.

p.3 - "mangro" - mangrove.

p.5 - "Castro" - not Castro, of course, but the government of that day.

kford: "Bottle" - Bottle Alley in Colon.  
p.6 - "disadvantage" - should be "advantage."  
p.10 - "Frank" - Harry A. Franck, author of ZONE  
POLICEMAN 88 and other books.

Isford: "sirvice" - service (toilet).  
"adds" - adze.  
p.3 - "johncrows" - buzzards.

michael: "lions" "tigers" - the only lion in Panama is the  
puma or mountain lion; there are no tigers but the  
ocelot and jaguar are both often called "tiger"  
locally.  
"blackfever" - blackwater fever.

rke, A. E.: "Dorothy Looking Batch" - Dorothy Luchenbach.

dley: "mongosse" - mongoose, but there are none in Panama.

sey: "Silver City" - renamed Rainbow City.

es: "mould" - earth.

tin: "bretts" - breadths. The commissary book consisted of  
a continuous length of paper, accordion folded, marked  
off in coupons. When an item was purchased the amount  
of paper equivalent to the price was torn from the  
book.  
p.6 - "goosyana gly" - from Spanish "gusano", worm.  
p.7 - "Backro" - white people.

tineau: p.5 - "repartration" - repatriation.

mons: p.6 - "24 States Building" - New York office of the  
Panama Canal.  
p.8 - "killing lillies" - hyacinth control, to keep  
floating vegetation out of the Canal channel where it  
could foul ships' propellers.  
"wait for the ship crew..." - a ship approaching  
the locks throws a line to a rowboat, this carries it  
to the side of the lock where the towing mule cable is  
fastened to it to be pulled aboard the ship.

Weeks: "grass barber" - grass cutter.

Peters, Albert; c/o United Fruit Company, Cristobal, C.Z.

I was born in Nassau Bahamas February 10th 1885 (a Carpenter by trade). One day while reading the daily paper I saw where they were digging a Canal from ocean to ocean on the Isthmus of Panama and needed thousands of men. I and two of my pals read it over and we suggested to take a trip over. We were all eager for some adventure and experience. My parents were against the idea. They told me about the Yellow Fever, Malaria and Small pox that infested the place but I told them that I and my pals are just going to see for ourselves. Well we arrived in Colon August 31st 1906, I was 21 years and there I got my first surprise, board walks for streets. We moved around the place a couple of days then took the train for Tabernilla where they had just started the new relocated track. I got a job as a straw boss with 30 men. Grading I knew nothing about a railroad, but being a carpenter I knew what grading was. The big boss was a man named Joyce. Now here was my second surprise. My nice clothes and shoes that I brought was not for down here in the heavy rain and mud. I was ashamed to go back as I had spent all the money I had so I made up my mind to face it. I sold all my clothes, my black derby, took the money and bought high top boots and blue jungree suits then I started on the job. The pay was 2 Balboas a day, those Balboas equal 50¢ U.S. currency. I kept well for a bout one month then I got Malaria. Went to the hospital which was up on a high hill and that was another surprise. The hospitals were a row of Army tents and the beds Army cots. The first night in there the man next to me died and that's the time I remembered my parents plea and wished I had taken their advice. After 5 days living mostly on quinine I came out and went back to work. In another 15 days I was back in there again 8 days this time. When I came out I found that my pals had left for Colon, so I decided to get out of that mud and rain myself. The latter part of November I went to Colon and found one of my pals working in the corral, he told me the boss wanted a man I told him I don't like working around mules. They are bad and can't be trusted. They didn't have any respect for Our Saviour, what you think of me. Anyway being very easy to be led I took the job just feeding them with hay and oats. After one month I got used to them and seeing the other fellows handle them I decided to drive. They gave me a big ashes color one, I named her Sarah and after a while she really knew her name. She would follow me like a dog. Well I took sick again (Malaria) went to Colon hospital fever 104. They put me in the European ward with the Italians. That first night in there I again

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remembered my parents plea not to go. About 2 A.M. the third morning I was sure roasting with fever, I saw an Ordely place a screen around my bed. It was a saying around town that when you are poorly they screen you around and the doctors cut you to see what is really wrong. As sick as I was I said to myself no operating on me. When the Ordely came back he took off my pajamas and placed me on a rubber sheet. I was stark naked on the bed, sick but ready for action. He came back with a towel in the basin. I didn't know what it was, he soaked the towel in the basin, never said a word to me, just plastired it right over my whole face. I don't know where I got the strength from, but I drew my two feet up and let him have it straight in the chest. He fell back knocked down the screen and I was up on my feet asking him what he is doing. Both of us mad at each other, but when the nurse came and told me they were bringing down my temperature, I apologized to him. I really thought it was something like ether to put me to sleep until the doctor came to cut, but it was ice water. When I came out I went back to work but found out that they had changed my mule and gave me another that they said won't cross over a bridge where water is. I had to drive over a bridge with water too in my driving and it was a lie. This mule never gave any trouble until one day driving on a narrow board walk about 9 ft. wide and 2 ft. up from the ground there were small cottages close to the board walk. suddenly a newspaper blew from between them and flopped right over the mule's head and face, he reared and jumped sideways, the right wheel went off the board walk then capsized, threw me right in a woman's front door. I manage to get up and cut the girth with the help of some others who were around got the mule out of the mud. Well that was experience and the last for me and mules. A few weeks later a friend of mine driving 2 mules shied on a bridge at 9th and D street Colon, everything went over in the muddy water both mules were drowned before they could rescue them. I left the corral, got a job as camp watchman for the contract men working on Pier 11. stayed on that job 13 months until they all left for their homes in 1908. Every man who worked for the F.F.R. or the I.C.C. and lived in the camps had to have a lodging check with month and date. That was to keep non employees out. Every day the timekeeper would issue them along with the meal tickets, 3 meals a day for 30¢ at the kitchens. If anyone was found in the camp without a lodging ticket, h'd have to tell the judge why and that's where it ends with a 5.00 fine. Every evening around 4:30 one could see #5 engine with a box car and the rough brown coffins staked one upon the other bound for Mt. Hope which was called Monkey Hill in those days. The death rate was high. The most

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deaths were from pneumonia and malaria, some from accidents. There were no Yellow fever at that time that I knew of. If you had a friend that you always see and missed him for a week or two, don't wonder, he's either in the hospital or at Monkey Hill resting in peace.

I took a trip home spent 5 months and returned in February 1909 worked on Pier 11 as a cooper 14 months ~~xxxxxxxxxxxx~~ then went at Gatun took a job cutting steel for reinforcements didn't stay there too long everyday rain and had to work in it for 10¢ per hour. While on this job I made up my mind to go over on the other side. I remembered that I'd need a Commissary book so I ordered a \$5.00. In those days you had to have ~~xxxxx~~ in more time than the value of the book to get it. I received the book in the morning worked the whole day and never went back to work or even for the few cents in 1910. Then I went over and worked as a diver Hydraulic-Excavatin, worked there until job was finished 2 years. That was at Miraflores. Before that I had worked a few months on La Boca docks. That work at Miraflores consisted of Concrete-Barges which could float, each has a suction pump and a discharge pipe line then 6 inch Nozzels cutting down the banks and washing the silt toward the barges which dumps it out in swamps and low lands. Here is something that couldn't happen today. It was one operator, one oiler and 4 divers on each barge it wasn't necessary for all four divers to go overboard at the same time. As the shift was 8 hours we made an agreement for each man to dive 2 hours only, only unless its something very ~~xxxxx~~ heavy for him to bring up then everybody will give a hand. The operator didn't mind as long as he got the suction clear. Well this particular day was payday, the pay car was on the other side of the bank paying. The ruling was, if you don't get your pay while the pay car was on the road, you couldn't get it until it has finished, then get it at the Administration Building in Ancon. The other men got their pay, they went across the bridge which was about 100 yards down the cut. It was my 2 hours shift, and that old pump had me overboard every 3 or 4 minutes. Rock and grass choking it. Everytime I come up I watch the car on the opposite bank, all of a sudden I heard it blew its whistle for going, I ran out on the end of the barge and waved my hands and hollered. They saw me and stop. I grabbed cap check and brass, check put it in my cap and slid on a wire overboard swam across then had to climb a muddy hill about 40 ft. When I got to the top the pay car was about 20 ft. in front of me I was so exhausted the policeman took my cap and helped me in the car there was my pay in front of me on the counter. I was as naked as I came in this world, except for my cap and Balboas and the last

Martin, George H.; c/o Fitz M. Barton, Box 466, Balboa Heights, C.Z. or c/o American Red Cross, Box 322, Balboa Heights, C.Z.

On arriving on the Isthmus, had been like a new world, leaving my native land on August 27th 1909.

After reaching the Isthmus, I were taken off the boat on the evening of September 2nd 1909. We were on the train that night, I say we referring to those who I did not know, but were all together; next morning we were at a place called Tabernilla, and were given corn-beef, bread, coffee which we enjoyed, and were happy.

Moving forward, the train brought us to a place called Frijoles where we got off, and were placed in homes. The homes we occupied were box-cars but at that time they were like palaces, so we enjoyed it.

I turned to work on the day of Sept. 3rd, 1909, with shovels and picks later on, a next piece of tool were included called the Spike-Mall. We worked joyfully, during these days, (as I am running over ground) we had an incident, the Chagress River came down, and over flow her banks, and this time we had a reflection of our home land when women and children moved in with us, we had to give place to the women and children for the whole place in what was called the town had been flooded, every house were under water, the thing about it, where the engine used to run, boats were handy. Going back to the beginning where our feeding started with the Commissary book after destroying so much corn-beef, bread, coffee, etc. for that was all we had.

A man by the name of Lang, or Lung, cant recall clearly the correct one, but his name started with an "L." This gentleman said to us "Boys," I am going to put you on your own, I understood that this man carried the title as time-keeper, he said I am going to give you a \$2.50 book, where you will take to the Commissary and purchase what you want, every man in the gang were given a book for \$2.50 so from there we started on our own, so gentlemen I will not hesitate to let you know, we felt happy! \$2.50 book had been plenty in those days, they were in 5 cents brets, to 2.50, it was called the tango the amount spent would be torn out, our lunch mostly in those days were bread, sardine, and ice cream, and at times for a change, we would have bread, corn-beef-hash, and never forget our ice-cream, I am saying here it was refreshing. We worked hard, but cheerful, I can

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assure you, our boss never had any worries, he only says what he wanted, and it was done

Continuing with the book

If we order a \$5.00 book, and in a day or two and that book does not show up, you are told to order again. Sometimes both orders would meet, and we would have two \$5.00 book, \$10.00. What to do with \$10.00 in those days? Here is a story, it caught me once. I bought some of everything, shoes also, to do away with it, \$10.00 would not finish. I bought a ham, at that time it look as big as I were, I paid \$2.21, talking about ham, real lean, I took ham to work every day in order to have it finish, my associate and I ate ham for days. I don't think about ham these days its too high in price, now it is for the other fellow.

(Next thing I should talk about) is the flour, in I.C.C. days bought flour by the gallon, not the pound, I can't remember really if there had been any 2 lb. or 4 lb. but what I do know, that I paid \$1.27 for a 5 gallon pan of flour each time we buy. One day my associate went to the Comsy. and so many tins were sold, the cashier seen to forget the 1.27, but he made sure to collect at least 27 cent, instead of 1.27 which was a real bargain, so I still call construction days wonderful days. We were paid 10c per hour, and work 9 hours a day, giving us the amount of 90 cent daily, over time pay was doubled can't talk about it, for at times it was plentiful, I had been in a gang, I can remember I turned to work at 7 o'clock this morning and drew off seven o'clock next morning, the boss, Johnson, comes up, "Now boys, I know you all are tired, but go home, and get a little sleep, and come back in to work at one o'clock, he did not order or compelled, he only plead, so we obeyed, and this went on for days, for we were cutting through a hill for the tract line; but again, I make use of the words, "the work of construction days had been a hard and rough struggle, but it was done cheerfully, and faithfully; thus giving the American people their hearts desire.

On our way from Frijoles to Montelirio, placing the new re-location getting away from the place called the Black Swamp, we had to contact much rotten trees and stumps, our white boss would pass and warn "Heh Boys don't put your hands under those rotten wood, you may find something under there, that if bitten by same, you would live only about 24 hours, they are called Antelopes or Black-spider. So we were very careful, and we did met with them plentiful.

"Man while bleeding mortals ever groan,  
List to the wails and anguish of their tones;  
Men who did yield to doubtfulness retire  
And failure marked them in its searing fire."

- Ambition -

- About the fever -

The fever lashed good and plenty. Sometimes walking on the Monte-Lirio Stretch, you meet men coming and going in each direction, in a sudden you look, a gang together, something happen, what? One or two of the gang on the ground flatten out, before help reaches, one dead long time, no more of him, thank God. Martin still battling along; in those days, you watch men shake, gentlemen, you think they would shake to pieces, these days are healthful days. The authorities did work on the malaria, they sent men around day after day with a colored looking liquid, the men would shout, come on boys, drink it up. Sweet at first, but bitter in the end, many men was afraid to drink, but I drank it with good heart, for the authorities did not mean to kill, their aims were to revive; this liquid was quinine, so they put a pretty color to it as a catch, so it catch me, for it did me good.

- Rain fall -

When you are going to talk about rain, please refer back from 1909 & 10 when we worked in rain, just as if it were sun; here is something to note, when we reached the Stretch on the way to Gatun, after leaving Monte-Lirio, it rained for days right through, day and night. We had a white boss whose name were Atkins, a young looking fellow at the time, the rain beat him, it turned us colored people almost white, but our boss, it brought him like white Calico, I mean white, for it was no use stop working, all of us were in the rain, we turned to work in rain, go to lunch in rain back to work in rain, we used to go to the bathroom in the morning, and put on the same clothes every day, can't mention everything, since it is so much along this line. Going all the way, being a carpenter prentice boy when I left my home Barbados, I then were given a saw, hammer, and rule, I worked then in culverts, I really can't call my foreman name, now, but he was a tall man, very tall.

I came back from the culberts, when the steel rail were laying, all "this is still on the re-location," the pullings were dropped, then the steel rail on top of them, we have to spke them up together, the boss's name, we used to call him Old Joe, the colored foreman being a french man, his name was

Morris, his second were named Victor all french. But we took the spiking of the rail, to the pulling, like a merry-go-round, this were a sight to watch us work along this line; as I said before, "the work was hard, but we did it cheerful; here is the play, when the rail had been spiked to the pulling, now it has got to be put in place. Every man with an iron-bar about five feet long, one would sing, and while he sings, you watch track line move, "the trang goes, you ball." The white bosses stands off and laugh, the Songster had a song, goes this way, he would sing part one, or first part, and we comes in with the second part, it goes!

	Nattie oh, Nattie O	- first
2nd.	Gone to Colon	
	Nattie O Nattie O	
2nd.	Gone to Colon.	
1st.	Nattie buy sweet powder	
2nd.	powder her - - - - -	- <u>you know</u>
1st.	Nattie buy sweet powder	
2nd.	Powder her -- - - -	- same

And so he would sing this song over and over, gentlemen watch track line move, the work appeared sweet, the white foreman enjoyed the singing they laugh and did laughed.

When time to go home, the boss shouts Go home, every man leaves his tool same place, until next morning, we would find it same place, of course, later, we had tool boxes, and all tools would go in the box.

1912 I moved over to the cut a <sup>(Miraflores)</sup> Mayflowers, where concrete had been going sky high, I got work on the wall, later, I was moved from the wall, and were placed on a platform, two of us, to receive the concrete that were brought by small engines on cars to the cranes, to be taken up on the wall, two great big buckets to an engine, when reaching the crane we would hook them up. This is my first damage I received from 1909 landing here to 1913. had been on the crane, it happened on No. 1 crane.

My partner failed to unhook his part of chain on one side, the crane carried three chain, one on either side, and one in the middle, so I unhooked the middle, and one side, my partner did not unhooked his on time, so the operator lift, and the great big bucket came over, catching me up against the coal box that carried the coal for the engine, it burst the belt that was around my waist in four pieces, I were sent to the

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hospital, and remained there for six days, and were given six small white pills, after that, I were sent back on the job. My time keeper was a dark fellow by the name of Holder. A gentleman by the name of Mr. Walker was the general man. Oh I see much in life in this here country.

- Life -

From cares, from strifes, from toil — some ways  
I come to thee for freedom;  
O lighten me with cords of truth,  
Endow me with great wisdom.  
Let knowledge from thy living throne  
Prevade my inner being  
Give me the portion of the free —  
The blessedness of living.

Gentlemen, I should not hide this, but every year when the time comes around, I feels the effect. Travelling on; later, I were placed in a gang, twelve of us, and we hand-mixed concrete daily, and built four of those light stands on the wall, a man by the name of Lennan was the general foreman, we received credit, that was all, but I see the men that just came in is given service this and service that. Anyhow, glad we were able to do it, and I am still alive.

Let me say,  
Light of our faith, before thy shrine we kneel,  
Print on our minds the stamp of Vict'rys seal;  
Lands we have served, forever turn their backs,  
Conquest seems far, but we will scale the tracks.

"Talking about the water  
coming into the Cut"

While working, some of our good bosses would find some encourageing talk for us, they would say to us, boys, are you saving your money, it won't be long from now, we will see water into the Cut, but we just take it for a joke.

I personally would say to my fellow men, that could never happen, my children would come and have children, and their children would come and do the same, before you would see water in the Cut, and most all of us agree on the same.

But it did happen according to schedule, and I must tell you, I had been a father, for my first child, January 24th 1914, running four months later. Here is an experience that I must mention, after reflecting back to the past, I am

tickled with thoughts of fright, we left the cut the Saturday evening, thus returning back the Tuesday, the Monday being a holiday, we were at home, Sunday and Monday, when the labor-train reached Mayflowers, we could not believe our own eyes, the train stopped away off, we could not get near to the place, we had left the Saturday; gentlemen, this had been a real surprising sight, as far as you could see around the locks were people like bundles of sticks set up like guard posts, standing amazed for hours, the bosses would walk around selecting his men, some of us were placed in death-traps, that is, we were to seize two stumps or body of trees that had float on the water and nail them together like rafts, and whether you could swim or not, two of us would have to get on this and go all in the water on the surface and clean it of all the debris that had float on the water, for the water brought up everything to top, except stones; you can figure out the job we had to bring all those things to shore and that was how the locks were cleared of its debris; the thing that had me so scared was that I could swim but like lead.

Since the Panama Canal, the growth of prosperity and comfortable living, which means bright days, my thoughts ran back to the dark days of the I.C.C. I were only 18 years a school boy, with a thinking ability, a voice from a great people saying "Hearken ye, people of a different tribe, Let not your heart be troubled, and so we were invited; at this age with the others I accepted, for this people, no other than the American people promised strong protection, and so I leave father and mother, brothers, and relatives, away in the land of the Indies, in the west, and came to this strange land now 54 years ago, still with a great heart for the same people I served before. I never mention about snakes, short jacket, this fellow when he lights on you, don't feel him until he is getting ready to quit and when he do fly off nothing but blood oosing out. The next fellow was the goosyana fly, when he stings, he leaves worms in the flesh.

One day about mid-day we met a snake about six inches round, and about 15 feet long at a distance, all we had was shovels to make the attack, but he looked more than us, so we bid him good buy in the bush. Another time, I were sent to fetch water for the men to drink, and the same place I go were five snakes the same place in the water, if they had made an attack on me, they would certainly harm me for I just couldn't move, I was so frighten, so see me; they went their way, and so I dip up my water, the same place; the water we drank in those days in the bush had been the same that every reptile

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drank, sometimes we had to boil it for it to taste good. Then here again, I remember the soap was only 4 cents a bar, but it would take a woman hand like Goliath to hold it, it was so big, not like today. The bread 3 to 4 ¢ each. Cod fish 4 to 8¢ per pound, the best; sugar by the 25 lbs bag, I try to remember the price, it had been 95¢ to \$1.00 only.

I dont want to go very far with prices, but I think I will quote a few more. I bought Quaker oats at 13¢ the tin, now it is over 29¢; corn meal, 3¢ the pound, corn beef, 10 to 11¢ the tin, matches 5¢ pack this was called the Parrott matches; the biscuits, this is termed now hard bread, we paid 6 to 8¢ the pound; St. Charles evaporated milk, large size, 9¢ the tin, the Nestles condense 10¢ tin, camphor balls, box 5¢. Something to wear, in those days we bought pants as low as \$1.00, silk shirts, the popular wear, we took advantage of this item, in those days we paid as high as 2.75, we could buy a two-piece suit for as high as \$3.00 & change so I make use of these words again, construction days were better days, never to be seen again, the money was paid small, but we live big. So many more things could be mentioned, which would call for more paper.

Praise heaven, to the Americans, for the Panama Canal, and yet there are a set of people so dissatisfied today, I see them but can't call them, this cause me to remember, A set of molatto people at my home town used to cook late in the night, and at times the pot is left open, and the may-bugs flying around would deposit into the pot with the soup, so when finish, everybody enjoys a hearty meal, the bugs were eaten, for more peas in the soup, next morning the left-over showed up the bugs, so the songsters around made a song of it. It goes this way, -

"Cricket gill and dry peas,  
Good enough for poor Backro,  
For who? Fou Dem,  
Fou dem, who?  
See them but can't call them"

So this reference is used: "I see them, but can't call them."

Gentlemen, I close.

Your humble servant.

retire with 46 years and seven months.

Suazo, Alfonso; Lote 63 - casa 215, Sección A de María:  
Eugenia, Chilibre, R.P.

Leí la tira de papel que anuncia la competición para la West Indians, y los no ciudadanos de los Estados Unidos, quienes trabajamos en el Istmo antes de 1915.

La tira de papel venía dentro del paquete de harinas, leche y aceite que el pueblo de los Estados Unidos nos donó.

Y los felicitó por la gran idea, proque contribuyendo cada uno con su pequeño obolo histórico ~~relatando~~ relatando lo que realmente vio y experimentó, se podía escribir la historia genuina del Canal de Panamá.

Bueno, es mi opinión, no se cual sea el objeto de esta competencia y empezare así:

Llegué a Panamá el 7 de Febrero del año de 1902 en el gran barco de la Pacific Mail Steam Ship Co. "City of Sidney," anclado al este de la isla de Flamenco.

De allí los pasajeros fuimos transbordados en un pequeño barco que se llamaba "El Bolívar," al viejo muelle inglés que aun existe en la ciudad de Panamá.

Advierto que aun cuando llegué aquí del puerto de Corinto Republica de Nicaragua, soy del puerto de Amapala Republica de Honduras (soy Hondureño).

Por una semana vivimos mi padrasto y me Madre y yo, en la calle 14 este, enfrente del cuartel de bomberos hoy corregiduría de Santa Ana. Despues pasamos a vivir a la Boca.

Como mi padrasto era piloto de altamar, y consiguió trabajo como tal en la Zona, nos dieron una casa de alto en el lado de los blancos.

La Boca se llamo desde donde esta el muelle cuatro (4) que fue construido por los franceses y que era tan extenso que su extremo quedaba frente al atracadero de los ferry-boats. Cabían cuatro barcos en su costado del tamaño de los de la Grace Line, como el Santa Cecilia.

Viniendo de allí hacia los diques, los talleres, los almacenes y saliendo por la puerta del area industrial hacia el cerro Sosa era donde vivían los blancos.

Del porton de entrada al area industrial, hacia los talleres de fundición, y los ~~almacenes~~ almacenes de madera, y siguiendo hacia el muelle 17, abarcando los talleres de pintura, toda esa area era comercial. Allí vivían los panameños, griegos chinos, españoles y todo el que quería inclusive los West Indians.

Allí habian tienda de abarrotes de Chinos. Habían tres tiendas de chinos con cantina y sedería anexa, eran los comerciantes mas fuertes. A este lugar le llamaban Cartagenita. Al otro lado del cerro Sosa no había nada, el mar banaba las faldas del cerro hasta el camino gabilan. El terreno era bajo.

Hoy es alto por que fue rellenado con la tierra que salio del Canal. Inclusive toda esa area donde esta el fuerte amador hasta llegar a las islas de flamenco, es tierra extraida del Canal.

Ya independiente la republica de Panama en 1904 llegaron los norteamericanos. Un mes or dos mas o menos despues llegaron los West Indians contratados. Tambien llegaron italianos, españoles (gallegos) en contrata.

La noticia de los trabajos del Canal, sin duda se propago con rapidez, porque en poco tiempo hubo gente de varios países hombre, mujeres y niños, es decir familias enteras y de todas las clases sociales, porque hasta prostitutas vinieron de ultramar.

Omití decir antes, que hasta Diciembre de 1903 el gobierno de Panama tenia jurisdiccion en la Zona del Canal, porque la policia panameña guardaba el orden. Continuo la historia o carta.

Los primeros trabajos que se hicieron fue fumigar y cortar el monte o sanear el lugar. Al mismo tiempo que se llevo a cabo el saneamiento en la Zona del Canal, se llevo en la ciudad de Panama.

Distribuyeron cuadrillas por las calles llevando cada hombre su escalera y una lata de un galon conteniendo almidon cocinado para pegar. En el hombro llevaban tiras de papel de dos metros de largo por tres pulgadas de ancho. Esto era para pegarlas en las puertas, ventanas, agujeros y aberturas en la pared para evitar que se escapara el humo cuando estaban las pailas prendidas con azufre y alcohol.

Si el edificio era grande, no usaban pailas de hierro, sino que despues de empapelar el edificio colocaban una maquina por la parte de afuera que suministrabab el humo de azufre por medio de un tubo que introducian en la puerta por el agujero de la llave.

Era tan fuerte la campana de fumigacion que tanto en la Zona del Canal como en la ciudad de Panama hubo una gran nube de humo espeso blanco de azufre que hasta las hojas de los arboles se enroscaban. Esta operacion duro poco mas o menos un mes.

Por la mañana y todo el dia tomaban humo las casas y por la tarde las puertas era abiertas para desalojar el humo.

Al mismo tiempo andaban otras cuadrillas registrando las aguas que la gente guardaba en barriles para el uso diario, como se encontraban con abundantes larvas de mosquitos se las botaban y les daba unas tapaderas bien ~~xxxx~~ hechas con tela metalica y les recomendaban que no dejaran el barril sin la tapadera se pena de multa.

Otros hombres regaban un material blanco que parecia maso de maiz blanco. Lo tirahan en los lugares humedos o mojados.

Habian cuadrillas que llevaban unos tanquitos a las espaldas con bombas y por medio de ella regaban un aceite negro donde habian aguas estancadas.

Como a la mitad del ano de 1904 los Norteamericanos prohibieron la venta de licores en la Zona del Canal.

Cuando entrabamos a trabajar, no daban un vasito lleno de un liquido rosado que teniamos que beberlo para evitar la malaria o el paludismo, era quinina.

Cuando llegamos a este pais, al mes, caimos con fiebre despues quedamos recibiendo fiebres tercianas, esto es un dia con fiebre y otro dia sin fiebre, hasta que nos aclimatamos.

A proposito ya que hablo de fiebre.

Lei un texto de historia del Canal de Panama, en el cual la autora sostiene que aqui hubo mucha fiebre amarilla y que el gobierno de Estados Unidos gasto ingentes sumas de dinero para erradicar dicha enfermedad.

Algunos historiadores exageran ya veran ustedes yo recalcare sobre esta noticia.

Yo sostengo que por fiebre amarilla nunca dejamos de trabajar. Siempre estuvimos escarbando, sacando tierra piedra y lodo del Canal.

No dudo que ustedes hallan recibido ya cartas en las cuales sostengan que aqui hubo fiebre amarilla como peste.

Yo entiendo que al escribir estas cartas debemos ser sinceros, relatando lo que vimos y experimentamos, no lo que nos dijo otro, para que nos consideren merecedores de alguno de los premios.

Fiebre amarilla son dos palabras que existen en las paginas de la historia, y tal vez en las mentes de quienes la escribieron; pero no en la memoria de quienes trabajamos en el Canal.

En el lado atlantico empezando desde Gatun existio una fiebre que le llamaban (aguas negras) en ingles Black Waters. Esta fiebre estuvo atacando aqui en Chilibre en el ano de 1926 y 1927, si mal no recuerdo. Hubo algunos casos, no pestes.

En los dias de la construccion, no hubo uno que dijera, el vecino de mi lado esta atacado con fiebre amarilla, o que decian hoy sera enterrado mi papa que murio de fiebre amarilla, nadie supo nada. Todos fueron rumores y si alguno supo que alguien habia muerto de fiebre amarilla, fueron los doctores a quienes les toco atender los pacientes en el hospital Ancon, permitanme contarles de la fiebre amarilla cuando ataco en los anos de 1895 en el puerto de Amapala, Republica de Honduras.

La gente que andaba por las calles se apropiaban de un malestar que los imposibilitaba seguir caminando. Trataban de asirse de algo. Se sentaban o caian de rodillas y luego ~~se~~ caian al suelo. Luego entraban a una coma que duraba de 20

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a 30 minutos y por ultimo arrojaban un liquido amarillo y finish.

Hubo tantos muertos en las calles, que el Alcalde ordeno unos hombres recoger a los muertos. Los cogian y los tiraban en unas carretas y los llavaban corriendo al cementerio. Alla no habian fosas individuales, lo que habia era una sanja de 76 pies de largo por 6 de profundidad. Allí los tiraban sin compasion y algunos iban casi vivos a acabar de morir a la sanja. Los hacian así para acabar con la peste. Esa sí fue peste.

Alla nadie necesito leer la historia para saber que hubo fiebre amarilla en la ciudad. Todos los sobrevivientes presenciaron el desastre patologico. Yo supe que hubo fiebre amarilla ~~xxme~~ aqui, en tiempo de la construccion, ~~por~~ que lei la historia en 1939.

Creo que con lo que ~~dejo~~ dicho con respecto a fiebre amarilla en los dias de la construccion, ustedes comprenderan mi punto de vista. Y repito, aqui no hubo peste.

En el año de 1956 publico la Estrella de Panama que el Hotel Tivoli cumplio 50 años de construido, y para corroborar la noticia dijo, que el expresidente Mr William H. Taf durmio en el una noche.

Mr. William H. Tafe en esos dias no era presidente. Cual fue el objeto de su venida a Panama, lo ignoro. Pero sí recuerdo que el dia que el se fue, el carro del ferrocarril en que el pasaba para el muelle a tomar el barco, se detuvo enfrente de mi escuela construida en la Boca, hoy Balboa, fijese bien.

Yo era alumno de cuarto grado y fui ordenado a entregar al Senor Taf una corona de flores (obsequio de muestra escuela). El senor Taf bajo hasta la ultima grado de la escalerita del carro y recibio de mis manos la corona mencionada. Cuatro ninas de mi grado mi hicieron compania. Desde la escalera expreso su agradecimiento y nosotros cantamos el himno de los Estados Unidos. Acto seguido, partio para el muelle. Que el Senor Taf durmio en el hotel Tivoli, es cierto. Lo que no es cierto es que el Tivoli ya estaba construido.

Si el hotel Tivoli hubiese estado construido en su totalidad con todas las comodidades y el confort para una persona como el senor William H. Taf, no solo una noche el hubiera dormido allí. La preparacion fue precaria.

La construccion del Tivoli se llevo a cabo muy lentamente. Solo el primer piso estaba construido. El resto hacia arriba estaba en armazon. Vino a quedar totalmente construido, es decir, pintado, decorado y con toda su ornamentacion de jardineria, en 1908, año en que fue inaugurado.

En el día inaugural que no recuerdo la fecha, de las tres

a las cuatro de la tarde se practico un simulacro de incendio en el ala derecha del edificio, o sea la que esta al norte.

En el ultimo piso habian colocado un tambor vacio de esos en que viene el aceite lubricante. En el habian colocado alguna basura con fuego, lo que hacia manar mucho humo.

Un hombre blanco vestido con camison largo y con una cabellera hecha con fibras de sogas escarmentadas, daba la apariencia de una mujer que habia estado durmiendo y gritaba: Help! Help! ~~Help~~ fire!

Llego un carro del cuerpo de bomberos de la Boca (Balboa). Un bombero tomo del carro dos escaleras que eran muy livianas pero fuertes de ocho a diez pies de largo. En gancho una en un lugar del edificio y subio llevando atado al cinturon el extremo de una larga soga.

Trepo la escalera llevando en el brazo la otra que engancho mas arriba, y asi sucesivamente hasta que llego a la supuesta mujer.

Alli amarro el extremo de la soga y despues de hacer un nudo especial deslizable, aseguro a la dicha mujer, se dio un empujon hacia afuera del edificio y se deslizaron hasta llegar a tierra sin hacerse dano.

Por la noche hubo una exhibicion de fuegos artificiales en frente del Tivoli.

Ese lugar donde se estacionan los carros era un campo abierto, no habia palmeras, a alli se quemaron los cohetes de luces de estilos varios.

La ultima parte de la exhibicion consistio en la gran presentacion de un cuadro de ocho por diez en cual estaba confeccionado con luces pirotecnicas, de colores que al pegarle fuego, se prendio todo el cuadro y se pudo ver en luces, el busto de Mr. William H. Taf. Esto que dejo dicho sucedio en 1908.

Yo vivia en esa area que han rellenado y que pasa ahora la carretera interamericana formando curva con pendiente. A ese lugar se le llamo Pueblo Nuevo. Era este un grupo de casas pertenecientes a un Arias y otros ricachos de Panama, es todo lo que se, por que lo vi, referente al Tivoli y su frente.

Volvamos atras al ano de 1905 viviamos en esos dias de la construccion al lado de ese edificio que se identifica con el nombre de House Wares and Home Furnitures. A la orilla de la carretera teniamos un arbol de mango y a su sombra un pequeno corral donde encerrabamos diez vacas y algunos terneros, los cua les pastaban enfrente donde esta construido el bowling-alley, el Comissary y donde esta construido el caserío de Balboa.

Desde alli hasta donde esta el Club House y el Teatro de Balboa, hasta el mencionado edificio, era donde sembrabamos el

maiz, yuca, canas, magos, tambien teneiamos un pozo. De alli la escuela me quedaba cerca. La escuela estaba donde estan hoy los talleres de fundicion.

Los sueldos eran muy bajos, habian cuadrillas que ganaban cincuenta centavos (0.50) por dia. En la division de dragas se ganaba de cuarenta a cincuenta y dos Dolares los fogoneros. Los aceiteros ganaban 57.50 y los marineros \$47.50. Ese era el maximo.

El dia de pago era el diez de cada mes en la Boca (Balboa).

Mi tercera noticia en mi concepto es falsa.

Cuando llegabamos a la ventanilla de la vagoneta de pago, el pagador nos decia: ponga el sombrero. Poniamos el sombrero y el nos depositaba nuestro pago en el.

Yo recibia siete moneditas de oro de \$5 dolares cada una, y \$2.50 en plata norteamericana. Algunas veces nos pagan con plata.

La historia segura que se establecieron las frases "gold roll" y "silver roll" porque los norteamericanos eran pagados con oro, y los no ciudadanos de Estados Unidos les pagaban con plata. A todos nos pagaban con oro y cuando ibamos a comprar algo a las tiendas, pagamos con monedas de oro ya fuera con monedas de 5, 10 o 25 dolares oro.

La ropa, zapatos y articulos de primera necesidad eran baratos aqui termina mi tercera noticia errada.

En 1905 cuadrillas de espanoles limpiaron toda esa area de Albrook Field. Estaba cubierta de vegetacion marina o mangle. En ese mismo año y principios de 1906 empezaron a limpiar el cerro Sosa, en esta faena trabajaron nativos, en ese mismo ano empezaron a rellenar la laguna que se formaba con la creciente de la marea toda esa area que hoy se llama "Fort Clayton" tambien el fuerte Amador, Balboa y la Boca.

Toda la tierra y piedra que se extrajo del Canal sirvio para rellenar esos lugares que dejo mencionados.

Tambien puedo decir que esa tierra y piedra salio de ese tramo del Canal que lo forman Paraiso, Cucaracha, Gold Hill, Culebra, Emperador, Cascadas, Obispo, Matachin, Gamboa, San Pablo y Gorgona.

Los trenes entraban al canal en forma de escalerilla o zig-zag.

Los trenes eran compuestos de diez a trece carros de balastre, y eran tirados por dos locomotoras una delante y otra detras.

Habia dos clases de carros. Unos para descargas tenian cadenas de ambos lados y se viraban de cualquier lado.

Los otros eran carros mas largos y tenian pared de un solo lado. El lado que no tenia pared era por donde caia la

tierra al paso del arado.

El arado era un arado gigante que ocupaba todo un carro y era el ultimo del tren.

Este arado era halado por una maquina y un gran cable. Al caminar el arado, la tierra iba cayendo al suelo. Cuando el arado iba caminando un hombre blanco iba sentado en el con una banderita roja levantada. Cuando la bajaba indicaba que el arado debía parar y de esta manera descargaban el tren.

Despues venia una locomotora empujando un carro dos cuchillas una de cada lado bajaba una y la pasaba por donde habia sido descargada la tierra y quedaba a nivel el terreno.

Yo empece a trabajar en 1908 y siempre trabaje para la division de Dragas, en el departamento de marina. Mi primer trabajo fue "gasoline boy" en una lancha de quince pies. Trabajaba en la guardia de noche con el supervisor, el supervisor que trabajaba conmigo de noche era Frances y se llamaba Mr. Sorrele. El supervisor que trabajaba en la guardia de dia era otro frances llado Mr. Roquebert y el superintendente de la division era un senor norteamericano que se llama Mr. McFerland. En ese tiempo trabajabamos de las 6 A.M. hasta las 6 P.M. dos guardias de 12 horas cada una. El trabajo mio era hacer funcionar el motor y hacer de marinero.

El senor supervisor guiaba la lancha adonde el queria ir, visitabamos las Dragas y Clapets para darse cuenta como andaban los trabajos o que necesitaban.

Clapets se llamaban unos pequenos barcos sisternas o tanques, en los cuales las dragas depositaban el lodo extraido del Canal, y lo iban a botar a la isla Naos. Estos barquitos tenian dos maquinas y su caldera quemaba carbon. Tenian como cien pies de ~~xxxx~~ largo por veinte de ancho. Como no habian diques, los capitanes fondeaban con marea llena, como cien pies fuera del canal y cuando la marea socaba, bajaba la tripulacion a limpiar el casco y a pintarlo. Esta operacion duraba mas o menos una semana. Habian tres lanchas con casco de madera como de 35 pies de largo con maquina de vapor de un cilindro y una calerita vertical.

Una se llamaba Mauretania, la otra Isquidu y la tercera Hyacinth.

Yo trabaje en la Isquidu. Me pase a trabajar alli proque con el supervisor trabajaba solo de noche, y en la lancha de vapor trabajaba solo de dia.

La obligacion de esta lancha era llevar los materiales que pedian por medio de ordenes, los capitanes de dragas trapets y los maquinistas.

Los materiales eran: Grasa, asbestos, lijas, pomada metalica, estopa (waste) jabon etc., era una lancha provedora.

Habia otra nave que se llamaba Sanidad. Era mas potente y de vapor.

Le tocaba visitar los barcos que llegaban de ultramar, para inspektar la tripulacion y los pasajeros. Si habian enfermos era conducidos a cuarentena.

Cuando no estaba en esta tarea llegaba a las dragas y trapets con el doctor para recetar.

Despues pase a trabajar al remolcador "La Boca" y desde entonces me gusto trabajar solo en remolcadores y en el departamento de maquinas. Si no era gogonero, era aceitero.

Habia un vaporcito parecido a aquellos con que eran equipados los barcos de guerra capitales de Estados Unidos, este vaporcito se llamo "Le Petite Luise." Supe que los franceses se lo llevaron a Francia y lo despositaron en un museo por haber prestado servicios en tiempo del canal frances.

Habia otra nave que tenia una torre muy alta en el centro por medio de la cual se elevaba una gran peiza de acero que al soltarla, llegaba hasta el plan, y desbarataba la roca que habia en el fondo del Canal, esta nave se llamo "Volcan."

Tambien trabaje en el clapet #5 y en el #8 en este ultimo trabajo mas porque en el era piloto me padraastro. Era griego y se llamaba Jorge Suris!

En las dragas como eran del sistema de baldes acoplados, teniamos los marineros un tiempo en que trabajabamos muy duro. La draga se movia hacia adelante y hacia atras y a babor y a estribor por medio de cadenas que tenian sus anclas en el banco.

Cuando habia que mover las anclas hacia adelante un clapet en marea llena dejaba caer su ancla donde se encontraba la de la draga, la izaba y la encaminaba mas adelante, segun los indicara Mr Roquebert el supervisor.

Cuando el cambio de las anclas se hacia en marea seca buen Dios! ibamos al banco sin zapatos con los pantalones arrollados hasta las rodillas nos colocabamos a lo largo de la cadena cuyos eslabones eran de cinco pulgadas, medianos. A una sola voz haciamos la cadena la levantamos y corriamos hacia delante y la dejabamos caer, despues que todos los que eramos veinte, levantabamos el ancla y la llevabamos hacia adelante y asi haciamos con las demas, era esta una tarea muy dura.

En la division de dragas departamento de marina, los griegos eran capitanes de dragas, y de clapets. Tambien habian griegos de maquinistas y de marineros.

Trabajaban tambien chilenos, salvadoreños, peruanos, nicaguenses, guatemaltecos y hondureños. Panamenos bien podian contarse los pocos que habian.

En los dias de la construccion el comercio tuvo su gran apogeo en Culebra y en Emperador. Habia tiendas y restauran-

tes, abarroterías con sedería anexas, panaderías, fábricas de aguas gaseosas.

Había un banco el cual españoles e italianos y todo el que quería hacer un giro, lo hacía.

También hubo rueda de caballitos (merry-go-round) donde la gente se divertía.

El comercio estuvo allí en Culebra y en Emperador como en la avenida central de Panamá. En Emperador había un parque. También en esos días había en la avenida central de Panamá muchas casas de cambio de moneda de diferentes países.

Como dije al principio en 1904 el gobierno de E.U. prohibió la venta de licores en la Zona del Canal, le contare lo que sucedió a los comerciantes aquí en la Boca hoy Balboa: Los dueños de cantinas y los chinos dueños de tiendas de abarrotes con cantina anexa, solo pagaban cinco dólares mensuales por la patente o permiso.

Antes que terminara el mes fueron advertidos que el próximo mes, les costaría la patente o permiso cincuenta dólares (\$50). Todos aquellos de escasos recursos cerraron sus cantinas.

Como quedaron tres chinos haciendo el negocio, pero que pagaron los cincuenta dólares, les notificaron de nuevo que el siguiente mes les costaría cien dólares la patente o permiso.

Dos de los tres chinos cerraron y uno pago los cien dólares y quedó haciendo el negocio el solito; pero que desconsuelo experimentó el chino cuando le dieron la última noticia antes de terminarse el mes, que en el próximo la patente le costaría mil dólares (\$1000), no aguantó y cerró la cantina. Esto sucedió en 1904. Otro caso y último estaba sentado en el balcón de la casa donde yo vivía allí en Pueblo Nuevo como a las nueve o diez A.M., no olvidarse que esa área que han rellenado enfrente del Tivoli se llama Pueblo Nuevo, vi pasar un locomotora llevando dos plataformas cubiertas con sendas lonas.

Como note que gran número de gente se dirigían a la estación del ferrocarril sentí curiosidad y yo también fui, haber que era la novedad de la gente. Que horror! cuando quitaron aquellas lonas se pudo constatar que eran pedazos de cuerpos humanos. La mayor parte era de gente blanca pedazos negros habían pocos.

Un centenar de huecos cargados de dinamita, habían hecho explosión en el lugar que se llama Obispo, y causa el gran desastre.

Como cogían esos hombres esos pedazos de carne humana y los depositaban en unas cajas y llevarlos al hospital Ancon! No se si los quemaron o los enterraron.

Suazo, A. - p.10

Como fue la explosion yo no se, tampoco vi la explosion, pero si vi las plataformas cargadas de pedazos de seres humanos.

En el ano de 1914, y adonde esta el puente de Gamboa, se hizo una gran represa con pura tierra. Las aguas se fueron acumulando lentamente. En el centro colocaron una carga de dinamita lo suficiente para destruirla.

Los explotadores fueron conectados con el cable submarino que pasa por Panama hacia los E.U., y de alli lo conectaron con un boton electrico que habia instalado en la Casa Blanca.

Como Mr Woodrow Wilson era el presidente de los E.U. ese ano y al presionar el el boton electrico, exploto la dinamita colocada en la mencionada represa.

Hubo mucha gente viendo el acontecimiento y fotografos tomaron instantaneas.

Las aguas del rio Chagres se precipitaron en el gran cauce que hoy es el Canal de Panama.

Esto es todo, con lo que yo contribuyo a la competencia.

Respetuosamente  
ALFONSO SUAZO

Alexander, Arnold N.; c/o Vincent A. Harrison, Box 1304, Colon,  
R.F.

I came to Panama on the Royal Mail boat the Attrate on the first of August 1909, on Sunday morning. I landed in Colon, the place was unsanitary, no good streets, nor houses, I took the evening train from Colon to Culebra, the place of my destination. At that time it was the I.C.C. In the early part of September, I got a job in the chief engineer office as blue printer helper, under Mr. A. B. Nichols who was office engineer in charge of the drafting department at that time.

... After I quit in December 1912 I went and work with the hydrographic section gaining on the lake under Mr. F. D. Wilson. I was gauging at Empire bridge across the canal when the President blast the dam at Gamboa thru connection with the cable from Washington; in 1914 October when the water came in the cut, I work for that division until 1918 December. I start to work with the marine division and navigation under Capt. F. Keriger pilot in charge on the salvaging on light house tending tugs Favorite and Taboga as relief quarter master until I was retired in 1953 in March. Since that time to now we have a lot of changes in houses, streets, shops and stores also post office and banks

All my employees and boss was real gentlemen they treat me real good with respect. I am now 76 years old as a retiree, living in the city of Colon Rep. of Panama

signature typed

P.S.

Mr. Arthur Raggs who was office engineer in the French time and Mr. David Debeau a draftsman were the only two Frenchmen that were left here when the U.S. took over the concession of the canal from the French government. They were left here to take care of the French files and drawings and to explain them to the American builders who may need some information on same  
....

Alleyne, Herbert, 10 St., #50, Parque Lefebre, Panama, R.P.

This is to inform you that I Herbert Alleyne arrive on the C.Z. on the 15th day of June 1908 and work with Andrew Brown on the track line. Then I was transfer to Jack Adams ~~in~~ the Center Cut Drill foreman as a drill helper. Then I was transfer to D. Hill in the Center Cut and Gold hill as a drill runner

Arrive June 15th 1908

HERBERT ALLEYNE

Work in water & mud. Rain & sun day & night

Living ) 4 ( in family

Allick, Helon I.; Domingo Espinar #35-19, Calidonia Post Office,  
Panama, R.P.

I the undersigned Do hereby declare and that I arrived in Panama from Trinidad on the 12 of July 1913 landed in Colon English dock. Started to work in Balboa around the Shops as cleaning or mucking on the 14 of July for 10 per hour Sometimes mixed concrete even cleaned the underground tunnel under thoses Shops in Balboa. I was then fancy by my Boss that he asked me to change my name and take me on as a new man at 13 cent, it was so done for I was then Henry Thomas. The gang was demolished in which I was transfared to the material yard where we cut steal and bend for different places ...

My interesting experiences is our General and constructing Govenor Geothel His construction and energectical way of the great lock & dam and our living conditions in Box cars and camps and fighting with thank & in fighting yellow fever and mosquitoes from placé to place

Your humble servant  
HELON I ALLICK

disability retiree

Archbold, Hendrix H.; General Delivery, Colon, R.P.

Incumbent (Hendrix H. Archbold) born in Old Providence, Colombia, on October 17, 1892, arrived on the Isthmus in the year 1907.

I started to work as a water boy with Tom Franstram at Cristobal, C.Z. From there to Dock 13 in the year 1909, working on the "Mary S" as seaman with Captain Perry, taking Major Harding from Dock 13 to Dock 11. I suffered great hardships with malaria fever. The whole place swamped with water. People were dying daily with Malaria Fever.

The Suction dredge "Culebra" and the Suction Dredge "Caribbean" were sucking up mud at Cristobal Harbor. Tug Empire and Tug Portobelo and Tug Bohio were towing scows from Cristobal Harbor to the dump with mud and sand.

Daily reports came in to send out a launch to pick up dead men, whose flesh were just dropping off from the bones. Big junks of flesh were just floating in Cristobal Harbor. At times, the launches were battered and at times the launches returned without operators.

In 1914, I worked on the East and West break water as Seaman with Captain Perry on the Tug "Coco Solo", Captain Snedeker as boss. Barge 91 was taking the big concrete blocks out of the barges to make the breakwater. Captain Snedeker was boss at that time.

After the breakwater finished, I worked at Pier 6 with Captain Nelson as boss, as a seaman on Tug "Coco Solo". I was transferred with the Tug Coco Solo to the Lighthouse Division in 1919. I worked as seaman with Captain Kariger until the time of my retirement on December 1954.

HENDRIX H. ARCHBOLD

Ashby, James; Apartado 3198, Estafeta Instituto, Panama, R.P.

I came to the Isthmus of Panama in year nineteen-o-nine on the twenty-first day of April. I came on the Ship by the name of Salan.

My first place of employment was at the Panama Railroad as a labourer my rate of pay was ten cents an hour for ten hours a day. Later I worked at the Gatun & Cristobal Sub-station then at the Ancon laundry as a rigger. Later in the same year nineteen sixteen I started working for Dredging Division where I worked until January first nineteen hundred fifty five. During the Construction days I witnessed many persons death some lost their lives on the Panama Railroad by trains, in the cement shed in Gatun. On the Gatun Locks many lives were lost also. Scuffles would break away hurting many and sometimes killing men instantly. Lord how piercing. In those days there was only one hospital on the isthmus Ancon Hospital. Men had to be rushed by train from Gatun to Ancon. The only two sources of transportation were by horses & train. Carts were drawn by horses. In the years when the Canal was being dug Malaria & Typhoid fever were the most dreadful diseases, there was hardly any cure men would be sick & dying still had to report on the job and work for if one did not work they could not sleep in the camp at night. Police officer would take them to jail. Sometimes a man would be sick leave the gang go into the bush & next you hear of him he would be dead. Whenever these fevers attack men would be assigned to serve the working gang with Quinine liquid. Working conditions were poor. In the year 1913 we started to put water in the Canal.

Austin, Harrigan; Estafeta Chorrillo, Apartado 5993, Panama,  
N.P.

At your request I am presenting to you a brief true story of my personal experience on the Isthmus of Panama during the Construction period. My first experience, landing at Colon, on the 9th of Oct 1905, from the royal mail steamship Crinoco having had a hazardous trip, of thirteen days of bad weather, poor accommodation in general with sparing meals on a Crowded Ship, we were all more or less hungry. We saw after landing on the dock, a pile of bags of brown sugar. And the whole crowd of us like ants fed ourselves on that sugar without questioning any one, and no one said any thing to us either.

Soon we were all loaded up in freight Cars and hurried off, and distributed at various Stations. My lot happened to be at Las Cascadas. It was a Sunday, we were led to open camps and given a cot each, and assigned to a place to Stay. Then we were gathered together, and marched to the mess hall, and given our first meal, and told when we should be there for meals and be ready for work the next morning. I had a box of Carpenter's tools, and was assigned to work at Bas Obispo, the next Station to Colon. There the carpenters was to work repairing quarters, take the midday meal there, and on evenings return on the labor train to Las Cascadas to eat and sleep. Our foreman was a white man, he appointed one of the most experienced men to be sub foreman as really the only thing he knew to do was to watch us but really very little about handling or directing a Carpenters gang. It rained excessively in those days and we were often forced to work in the rain, in order to show up a days work; the bad thing about it we had to get our own tools and do skill labor for the same 10¢ per hour at 8 hours per day, which was only 80¢ per day. While the unskilled laborers was given their tools, picks, shovels, machets, etc; and received equal pay as us, and at some times when it rained if we were not working while it rained our time was cut. Indeed to some degree life was some sort of semi slavery, and there was none to appeal to, for we were strangers and actually compelled to accept what we got, for in any case of an argument we would have to shut up, right or wrong; And the bosses or policemen or other officials right or wrong could be always winning the game, and those men who had the chances of filling such positions were generally of the dominating type who tried to bring others into subjection for their fame. Most of the time the food prepared at the Mess Kitchen was poorly cooked; sometimes could scarcely be used. Most of us was forced to find other ways to feed ourselves. Clothing was also a problem they were no laundries or women who could do

our washing for us we had to do it for ourselves the best we could. We had to bathe, wash our clothes in the same river drink the same water and cook. The horses and cattle all of us together used the same water. Some others who couldn't do their own washing for themselves wore their clothes as long as they could, then threw them away and put on new ones, and kept repeating that way; that method sometimes created germs and sickness — then we had the malaria fever, and poorly trained doctors and nurses indeed many went to an early grave because of the lack of proper care and trained attendants who had any understanding of handling a sick human being. Many went deaf from the excessive use of quinine used for malaria, and any one who happen to get sick and go to some of those dispensaries, quinine was prescribed until many persons couldn't even hear when the engineer blew the engine whistle to get them off the railroad track, and many were killed. Some were so afraid of those doctors in those days they would hide away and try to use their own remedies and when caught up with, would be brutalized and some time carried to jail, for the rule was laborers should be on the job or in hospital and if caught hanging around during working hours — and at nights no one was allowed to have even a candle burning in the Camp after 9 p.m. lest they should disturb others from sleeping. This was very good for those who had to do a hard days work and not in very good health

As I have already said, they were few women here in the early Construction period. And were many men who didn't seem as though they could get along without the opposite sex, hence the absence of women seemed to have been disadvantageous for many, and caused some difficulties. For this the government brought many French women from Arknique and those who wanted went to those in authority and took themselves wives and became responsible for them hence some of those conditions became better — on another hand — Many accidents was caused on the jobs because they were not so many precautions and safety measures then as we have to day. Some of those in authority were untrained for their positions, causing many accidents although they were doing the best they knew -- note also skilled workers in Construction days did not have the privilege as today. We had to prepare all our material for jobs from our own brain and manual labor we had no machinery to prepare our working materials we had to take the rough lumber or metals cut them up to dimensions, and make what we wanted for small wages at that — The excavation side of the Construction period was rough, and without a remedy, the method

used then was the best known to those days so we just had to face it. I had left Carpentry and worked directly on the drilling work for the actual explosions and removal of excavation of the water way dynamiting and breaking up the soil rocks etc. This work was rough, dirty and rushing the drilling of holes for dynamiting and blasting up big rocks so that the steam shovels could be able to load them in the trucks. I worked at this work in Pedro Miguel and Miraflores from time to time. Day and night, sun or rain, for they were times when it was compulsory to go through the rain in order not to hold up the shovels or the trains things had to be on time. Some times some of the holes loaded fail to go off in the blast and that unblasted portion remains until struck by the shovel then explodes and many have been injured this way. Some times below hills rocks fall from above on men working making trouble. I have had to work on flooded areas in Mira Flores for days and nights in water up to my waist where pumps were useless. Some times the rocks were so hard, as fast as we could change a drill and put a sharp one the rocks would break them in Cocoli excavation, but it had to be done. I have witnessed a train loaded with railroad tiles in Mira Flores Cut, and the Engineer applied his brakes suddenly, and the tiles from both cars ran together, caught the brakeman between the two set of tiles and squeezed him to sudden death. And also the Pedro Miguel Cut explosions when many was injured. In the year 1907 I worked at San Pablo where there was people on one side of the Chagres river and people on the other side called Caimito people used to go back and forth day and night in their work a cayuca boat was used to take the people back and forth one night it rained very hard and the river was swollen the boat-man thought he could cross over and tried to do it with a load of 12 men the river took them away and I heard he never was found or the men. Some other times when the boat turned over the men would swim over. I also was used to erect a cable swinging bridge from one side of the river to the other, joining the two sides of the section so that people could walk over from one side to the other. My foreman at that time was called Picky I didn't know his other name. I also experienced an explosion the same year at Caimito when the shot went off unexpectedly before the time I was living the same place and had moved out the day before the explosion, and was on hand to help do the digging to find those who were killed in that explosion; these are but a few of the experiences of Construccion days happenings. Things which took place in the making of this water way which has become of untold benefits to the world at large, tis reasonable to understand in any big war or any such projects as this, something

will happen. Some must suffer for the good and welfare of the others for where there is no Cross they may be no Crown

Such have been what may be considered the dark side of the picture, but there is also a bright side. In the beginning of the Construction period, the Isthmus of Panama from Colon to Panama was altogether or practically nothing to compare with what it was at the close. At the beginning, both the cities also the stations along the lines, were all in a miserable condition. The best street in Colon or Panama could hardly afford a place to walk if just a shower of rain fell, and not only mud, t'was a common thing to find that you had stepped in real filth of different kinds human filth as well as that of animals. The sanitation was the worst I had ever experienced any where before. This was all changed. Many people who ran away, back to their homes, being afraid of the unhealthy conditions, were now coming back to Panama, and bringing their families, and those who stood here and endured the conditions were sending for theirs. Many who were unmarried, sent for women and married. Things had changed for the better, and people from all over the world were coming to Panama. We had better Doctors good sanitation, better prepared food, laundries and more justice in the Courts, and better respect in general from our superiors. Christian workers were doing Church work along the various sections. And the Isthmus of Panama became a place to be desired. But few of the natives of Panama were interested to work in the Canal in those days — the few who ever did was unreliable. Most of them, as soon as they got the first pay, they'd go drinking and may show up some future time. The men who stuck to the job, as with a purpose were the West Indians and the Europeans. The material excavated from the Canal was used for filling swamps, and such places which was too low, and could be used advantageously by raising. Such places above the level of the water level, of the Canal waters, such places as we now call Fort Clayton, Curundu, Balboa Flat, Fort Anador, also Tabernilla and Gatun so the work in removing the dirt from the Canal served two purposes digging the ditch for ships to pass, and filling the low places to be used for all occasions in the operation of the Canal. Then there is the wonderful engineering and equally great mechanism in the making and hanging of those gates at Gatun, Pedro Miguel and Mira Flores also the tunnel for passing trains, t'was all excellent. They had their difficulties, but the accomplishments has more that repaid them. They were many that said the Canal would never be finished, but would be with

Austin, Harrigan - p.5

the Americans as it was with the French. But Thank God, the Canal has been finished and has become a blessing to the world at large. A great accomplishment, the work of a Great Nation — May God Bless America.

I thank you  
HARRIGAN AUSTIN

Banister, Albert; c/o Fitz A. Banister, I.D. card 5876,  
Colon, R.P.

Memorandum and past history of the Panama Canal from the 10th of May 1914 to 1953 when I got disability releaf retirree first place I work same week I landed hear work for Cristobal boiler shop working for 10cent an hour with colored foreman other words straw Boss working under general fourman Mr. Cummins American every 11 oclock there was a fight in the area the Boss intervean by making rules prohibit of fighting during working time 10 minutes was allowed to any man who wish to fight and mind you must not go to no Police after the fight you will be fircd that was the ruling cause Police not to intervean at that time our brass check was round having I.O.C. and your number on it ~~xx~~ during the time of War Kizar William of Germany our brass check was change to round Foto check bearing your number after the war the check was change to a brass check  this shape bearing Panama Canal and your number after that the check was change to round check bearing Panama Canal and your number now of late it is change to Identification card bearing your foto and your number betwin 8 to 9 oclock A.M. a man having a big leather bag full with paper cups and a one gallon bottle full of quinine will call you and give you a paper cup and will pore out for you many will gladly take and many will behave bad then the man will call the Police you either drink or go through the gate you lost your job you will have to go to a next job where nobody know you and the next bottle man don't know you I work from 10 cents - 12 cent - 16 cents - 20 cents - 24 cents 52 cents - 62 cents last lap I joine the Dredge Cardinass dipper dredge in the drydock after the repairing we depart and go to Culebra ~~xy~~ man die get blow up get kill or get drown during the time someone would asked where is Brown he dide last night and burry where is Jerry he dead a litte before dinner and burried soon and so on all the time Malaria was raging yellow fever was raging another fever was call tyfod fever raging in matachin section United States Citensin and West Indian lives and blood was taken to put through this Canal Uncle Sam had to run through the door left it open and get foreners to do his wark we had Colored Americans working good men skillful men but they can't pull with the White Americans always a fight and trouble ~~xxxxx~~ if not West Indians could never be hear because Uncle Sam have plenty Colored Americans to do his work also they don't like down hear to get away they make plenty trouble at that rate West Indians get a break if not so when we had arived from our native land to Cristobal Dock No. 2 we would have to take the

Banister, A. - p.2

next boat back home it would be too many dogs for the pice  
of bone the people of today working 8 hour long time from  
6 to 6 six to six 8 hours caught me working on U.S. Dredge 83  
at cocoa-solo Master Captain Carl a swdish Captain Hemfry  
was first-Master all hands on deck the two watches was split  
into 3 watches from 7 to 3 and 3 to 11 and from 11 to 7 Praise  
God and United States Officials that solve that plan at that  
time hundreads that was out of a job get a job when the watch  
was split it took a few more men to fill in each watch I was  
from Dredge to Dredge like a rat Cardinas will go to dry  
dock men trans-fer to Mindee dipper Dredge from Mindee to  
82-83-84-86 Dredge which I tye up in Gamboa \_\_\_\_\_ fleet  
I work on U.S. Dredge Marmoth ladder Dredge Master Cp Lutio  
a Creek I work for Mr. Meddinger at Fariso line man I work  
for Mr. Stubes Master Barge repair I work for Mr. Wynne  
Gravel plant Gamboa all so Mr. Randy Trower I had friends  
in Gatun Locks I here-fore voluntary quit to to Gatune Locks  
show my clearence to Mr. Dowee he put me to work emediately  
on the mule he got to know that I know about splicing cabbe  
and rope I was just the man I was laid off a few months  
later Mr. Dowee gave me a letter told me he is sorry but  
take this letter to Mr. M. A. Smith Chief-storekeeper I load  
sement I unload seament I carry lumber untill my shoulder  
peel one day Mr. Smith offer me a watch-man job I work 8  
years watch-man from 11 P.M. to 7 A.M. punching clock you  
must not miss the clock teel no lies I was call inside the  
store get a job as store-man I work up to 1953 I got a  
cirtificate of thanks from the Governor of the Canal Zone and  
Panama Canal We had plenty to eat good place to sleep good  
medical attendance you get pay promp rain or shine pay day  
never put off their is not a man can say Uncle Sam rub or  
cheat him one black cent what you aggrse to work for that  
is what Uncle paid you I was admitted at Ancon Hospital  
about 12 times I had Malaria for five years I got hurt or  
injur many times God bless the Officials that found out safty  
commetee I was a member in the store house Many men was  
working for the Panama Canal for 50 years may be at the  
Panama railroad pear pushing hand truck working ship hole  
checking cargo time keeper they have not all the experence  
of the Panama Canal in Culebra cut that is call Gilliard cut  
that was where the Government had the stiffest job which I and  
others never believe will ever put through because today you  
dig and it grow tomorrow beside it slides every day the  
Government wash down the hill give it a bath night and day  
untill the hill catch cramp then bless it up with dannimite  
that was done year after years ~~enxthexfannax~~ on the Panama

Banister, A. - p.3

railroad labour train man get kill or injur every week being late for work hup the labour train get kill foot cut off When they blass the dyke Colon trisble the big breakwater outside Colon is protecting Colon habour all those rocks is from Gold Hill which is call now Gillard cut down in colon city the street that is call Broad-way was mangro and stagnant water with mosquitoes I was on Dredge 36 and we fill that earea who go to Jail petty charge 10 days 10\$ step aside said the Judge you get fine and confine that was the law men and woman would ruh for their lives through the bush if caught go to Jail pay a fine and get married many people get married for six months but it did not last for their was no love they just went for a short time but bad luck catch them so marriage did not last but it was the law of the Canal Zone don't stand for bad life. Plenty men trying to save some money to go home I also every man you will find him with a leather belt round his waste on his skin those that want to care themself eat good and tidy themself was compell to spend what they have round their person Hundreads of men lying down in Colon streets dead some pick up on arrival dead some 2 days after dead ~~xxxx~~ all the report from the Doctor was stavation kill him man hungry till he drop at that time we use to get pay with gold coins police thief it from them wheel you round back to Canal Zone Hospital many men went back home because he lick-down some person white or colored run and leave his pay-day and never come back some stow-away ~~xxxxfirst~~ the first gentleman that learn me to drink was Uncle-Sammy I left my Homeland at 19 years of age I never know ~~hxx~~ to drink, drink was introduce to me at Cristobal boiler shop when you drink that quinine you feel for 15 minutes you are the sweetest man in the land but Uncle never told me to get drunk many get beat up get kill by Canal Zone Police it never happen to me when you are respectable law abiding person Uncle Sam stand by you remem- bdr the Laws must be at all cost respected we had many nice Song during the time at work first song, steam boat bill down Missippy, second I love you yes I do. third. If you don't like Uncle Samay don't be ungreatfull to him and many more it take me a whole year to remember all on account of high cost of living I am not in a position of a little money to purchase writing paper to write all that I remember I there-fore beg Uncle Samay to remember the disability releaf retirree all persons from every country come to the Canal Zone to see this great Canal we will soon dead out but while we alive please give us a little to eat we cannot beg the other fellow he don't know us every body want the Canal all you can hear gee me gee me gee me nobody did help

Banister, A. - p.4

Uncle but Uncle and Uncl alone I am nervous I will close  
Uncle Sam had down hear big American horses and mules Police  
use to keep duty on horse back the mules will be drawing big  
cart picking up garbage the mules are trained they knows  
cachee blow at 11 oclock when 11 oclock they stick up their  
ears straight if the driver was foolish to call him come on  
Jacky for a next load he will kick up smash up the cart  
and put you in Jail they fine you 25. step aside you are  
charge for being cruel to dum animals better you was charge  
fighting with someone never you touch the mule he will look  
you up he will kick untill Police come many men run away  
for a mule now a days the men go to work with a lunch keet  
having a few piece of bread one apple a bottle of hot coffee  
call in Lunch long before that would not do that can't work  
that can't dig Uncle Sam Canal you have to carry a proper  
meals heavy meals and Uncle have it prepair for you the  
best of everything but we was tired with the food so we gener-  
ally wake up 3 A.M. sometimes 2 A.M. cooking rice and pease  
and heavy pork-chup or beef stake or big junk of ham the  
meals is set we report at Uncle in the Mess Hall for breakfast  
we had more than plenty to eat they will take the bread and  
the knife give the bread wap - wap take butter dump it in  
their a big pisce of ham or cheese or beef stake double in  
there accompany with hot coffee then you sit and eat ~~fk~~  
it was goodx very good — rough and regular that was the  
chief piece of tool which we use to dig Uncle Sam Canal  
uncl knows what he was doing he both kill Malaria and open  
up our appetite and get this work done we never know what  
is call lunch time we know breakfast time dinner time and  
supper time ten cents per hour was just like a flie into  
one of those big American mule nosstrill why you did not go  
home Banister respectful I answered Mam I would glad to  
go home but ~~fx~~ I can't go home empty handed first all of my  
relative is dead nobody know me at home I am a perfect  
stranger no friends no family they all dead out I have all  
my people down hear whom I accustom to I may fall into the  
hands of robbers get beat up and rob so I rather stay hear  
I have no one at home was away too long we did not have  
automobil we had cart and horses buggy and horse we were  
using for fuel wood and coals all the houses have smoke stack  
we had ice pitchers no freezadcer we never know that  
erroplane come late after the men of today have electric  
stove radio tellaviston recorder elictict ice box tallafone  
all we have was the wet clothes on rain falling every day  
you see every man and wohan with raincoat and umberla you  
will find good waterproof oil skin at the Comassary when we  
was in Empire section their was a big shed a steam boiler  
in their plenty clothes line stretch out white and colored.

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will bring their wet clothes their a man with a long stick in charge of the boiler will receive your wet clothes put tag on them take care of them he would make plenty money he get 10 cents an hour the Americans will all tip him when they come for their clothes we never have anything to give him clothes was very cheap no man would steal clothes Soldiers will meet you take you round the back having on his person three under-ware sell it to you new bran for 60 cents go lower down and buy his rum one pint of rum for 10 cents he received a plenty of money to get drunk we had colored time keeper they know their stunt they would time dead man get plenty money pay-day get caught by Uncle go to the Fennetentry or run away to cuba cuba was the place of refuge for all those that commit them-selves in the Canal Zone/anything that was carry away from the Canal Zone to Cuba Castro receive you and the article free of tax a colored french-man fisherman he was of age deside to go to the Canal Zone and get a job he approach the Boss. Boss, I beg you for a job the Boss look at him saying you are too old he left the man went back get a good trim a nice shave go back to the Boss next day Wa-e-say Wa-e-say now still too ol. The Yankee answer you doggone right you still too old. I am nervus my eyes is weak I remain yours sincear faithful servent -

ALBERT BANISTER

Born in St. Lucia B.W.I.

Beckford, Reginald ; Box 22, Colon, F.I.

I the undersign takes pleasure in giving you a true story in connection with the construction of the Panama Canal. Seen from the Atlantic side City of Colon where I was born. Colon had always been the first place of operation. Be it the Panama Rail Road, or the Panama Canal.

Taking a walk on Bottle which has now been named Balboa Ave. and 5 Street. I dont remember the year. I saw a man with mustache wearing eye glasses; riding a fine looking black horse. I felt at that time that he is a man of prominece, because there were other men following him on horse back, riding, going towards the Washington Hotel, which in those days was a frame house, nevertheless very imposing. I heard a loud voice from those people who were standing around shouted "Roovelt;" then another voice, Teddy Roovelt. I was not interested, being a teen age boy at the time learning the jewelry trade. I passed that very spot three or four times a day where I saw Roovelt. I was born not very far from where I had seen him. This man who I saw riding on horse back, was the signal for the building of the Panama Canal. After many months, I began to observe that whenever a ship arrives at Colon, many men and women disembark. Finally they were contracted by the thousands. What had increased me much was that so many women were disembarking also. I was determined to know why so many women were among the men. I had been told that they were contracted. Men and women.

"It wouldn't be a feather weight of worth without a woman in it." They came from the West Indies. There were of every Nationality and race on this Isthmus. The West Indians made up the majority. These hundreds of West Indians were first employed as sanitary men. Corry's, now dead was the man who made the Isthmus Sanitary. Sanitation was a must for the Panama Canal. These Sanitary men goes into the swamps and bushes with a can of deadly white liquid, drops a little of the poisonous liquid in the crab hole. In about five minutes the crab comes out and dies. Fat cages (not traps) were deposited on the top of Houses and dark alleys. These cages were large enough for more than two dozens rats. The size of guinea pigs.

Unlike the French, the Americans had started from the bottom up. All work now had been in its initial stage. Pertaining to the Canal project. Work for all who wanted to work. Rates of pay was not as high as of today. Plenty work; a lot money in circulation. I left the jewelry trade. Was first employed by the Isthmian Canal Commission ICC as special messenger for

Beckford, R. - p.2

John Burke at #2 building in Old Cristobal. #1 and #2 buildings. Old French frame houses. Very large. Imposing. Specially built for office work. Left by the French in their failure. Number one and number two buildings; later had been named I.C.C. buildings. Those two, very large. Two stories, could hold a clerical force of forty. Those frame buildings were like Balboa Heights of today. Situated exactly in front of the Fort Captain's building in Old Cristobal. Tobey, who at that time had been Superintendent, and had occupied a part of building #1, had requested just before closing time that all of us return at 7:30. Good care had been taken to see that the order had been obeyed by every one. We were at the bottom floor. We were lined up abreast. A few minutes after, I saw a man descending the stairs from the top floor, as he came down he approached the first at the head of the line (I was second to the last) and began shaking hands saying a few words. I stood erect, waiting my turn. (Here comes my turn.) He shook my hand and said to me I am William Howard Taft. You may remember that he had been Secretary of War during the early construction days. Those two I.C.C. buildings were identical in structure; large, and had been built close to each other by the French. At the beginning, the Americans had to use everything that were good enough to be used until they had their own built, or brought down from the States. As a Special messenger for John Burke, I came near losing my life. Letters had been given to me by my boss to be delivered at drydock. From the I.C.C. building to the drydock is far. Had to walk all the way. Seeing a yard locomotive, with two old French flat cars attached, going towards Monkey Hill which has now been named Mt Hope. As the train was near the drydock, I alighted. I was not afraid as it had been going very slow. I was prevented from jumping clear by a large nail in the old French flat car which held my pants. Trying to extricate myself, the letters dropped and scattered. A man coming along saw my predicament and called to the driver of the locomotive. The train stopped suddenly. This man picked up my letters after helping me to extricate myself. I was being dragged along about 10 feet, instead of being pushed. That's what had saved me from injury, or death. In my opinion, I think that all persons who had worked in the Construction days for the I.C.C. should be given some kind of recognition. Be it one day, or twenty five years. I had sixteen years. After working as a messenger for three years, and could not get a raise in pay, I quit the job, and was reemployed as mail clerk for the I.C.C. As a mail clerk, I became acquainted with many of the names of high officials keymen of those construction days. Goethals, Sibert, Leasy Gorgas, Bick and many others; some of whom are still alive,

especially in Florida. Others have passed on to the Great Beyond as I have seen in the Star & Herald. I want to believe that most of those who came to the Isthmus to build the Canal came from Florida. I know Mr. Bierd. Camp Bierd was named after him. After five years as a mail clerk, I resigned. Two months after I was reemployed as a sales man at the Cristobal Comisary at the gold side. Working at the Cristobal Comisary brought home to me the naked truth that a Panama Canal is being built, with all its ramifications. Hundreds of deaths and injured in its train. It has been said that more lives had been taken in the construction of the Panama Canal than in World War I.

The regular 4:30 train pulls out for Panama with engineer Billy at the trottle. Billy (now dead) had been a serious locking man, but very humorous. His policy is (whether he is talking truth or not) that he will stop his train on the tracks for a horse, or a cow but not for a human. As a sales man, I usually works in front of the Comisary where I could see all trains when they passes. Billy's train headed for Panama is now passing. I saw one of the passenger coaches gave a slight lift. In a few seconds, I saw people runing towards where I had seen the coach lifted. I ran out (I was not singular in doing so) to see the half body of a man laying on the tracks. The man had been cut clean across the abdomen. His hands untouched, his eyes opened. Where are his legs? His legs had been carried almost a city block. From where the Old Cristobal Comisary is at present, to where the Old Cristobal police station was in those days. At the crossing near the Rail Road tracks. Taken up with pants and shoes on. Intact. Pants and shoes had not been torn. I was not afraid of losing my job when I ran out to see the half body of a man on the tracks. The Americans were friendly. The train did not stop after runing over the man until it reaches Monkey Hill (now Mt. Hope). Billy had been the engineer. He will stop his train on the tracks for a horse or a cow, but not for a human. Those were his words always.

Culebra and the Abasco (San Obispo has been named Gamboa, if my memory serves R. Mt). Col. Coethals (who made the dirt fly) had been living at Culebra. The main artery of the construction in other words. It was a picturesque sight at Culebra. Passengers on the train usaly gets up as train is passing Culebra to see hundreds of men at such a great depth of the earth. So deep, they looks like hundreds of small boys moving around; many steam shovels and cranes looks half their size

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from the great dept. Pasengers including myself gets up from their seat when the train is nearing Culebra. Avalanohe covering fifty men at Culebra; sometimes more. Bas Obispo had taken the greatest death toll in one dynamite explosion in one day only.

To be continued if God permits  
REGINALD BECKFORD  
Jeweler

By this you will know that I am still in the flesh.

God willing. Hoping that what I had written previously has been some interest

I repeat. As a salesman at the Cristobal Commissary in the construction days, gave me the oportunity of coming in contact with hundreds of men of every nationality who were working on the Lines. From Corozal, Matachin, Lascascadas, Miraflores, Bas Obispo (now Gamboa), Pedro Miguel, Gorgona, Empire, Barbacoas, Bohio, Frijoles and Gatun. Those old trunks of trees and stumps projecting out of the water, which you may have seen yourself, are silent witnesses of few of those stations which are under water. Work trains for those who works at Corozal on the Pacific Side, and lives at the Atlantic Side, and for those who were employed as far as Gatun on the Alantic Side and lives in Panama City on the Pacific Side. Such a condition was imperitive because their were no barracks, neither quarters built for those employes at the early stage of construction. (For example) I had seen two Panama Rail Road box (Freight) cars like those of the present time with numbers on the sides converted into two rooms apartments, with ventilations, not more than about 2 feet by eight, with curtains. In this age, they would have had Radio, or Television (laugh) Their was one in Front Street near the Strangers Club, and another at Fálks River (near Mt Hope). Work train bringing hundreds of men after a day's work stoping at the Commissary to make their purchases. As a salesman in the Fruits Ice Cream Meat and Vegetable department . My job was on the Gold side. Their was always great rush around five o'clock that they could hardly move freely. I goes over to the Silver side. From these men who works at the Pacific end and lives on the Atlantic Side, and those who works on the Atlantic end and lives on the Pacific Side you are being kept informed. Men covered up by tons of earth; others blasted to pieces by dynamite accidentally; we

gets news from the men before it is published in the Star & Herald or Canal Record the following day for they covers the length and breath of the Canal Construction Area. For example. After I had finished waited on two men, one of them gave me two shark teeth; the other fellow gave me one, from out of a rock that was blasted in Cut. I said nothing to him, nor thank him. They saw where I was skeptical; unbelievable about shark teeth taken out of rock instead of the sea. (Fishing is my past time.) Shark teeth like all other teeth is white. I looked at him with a doubt. He looked at me and said Man, you have you never heard that these two Oceans had been joined together? I have heard so said he, and these shark teeth we got out of the cut proves it. I believed him afterward, because their color were not white. Their color, dark grey, some, near black and petrify. Many men in the Construction days could be seen wearing black ribbon watch (pocket) fob with mounted (in gold) shark tooth attached. Shark teeth from some of those rocks which had been blasted by dynamite. For centuries (God only knows how long) they had been in some of those rocks. As a jeweller by trade, I had mounted a few in gold. They were large, the size of a man's wrist watch in diameter, and larger. Shark teeth from Culebra Cut and Bas Obispo had been a very good soveneres of the Construction. On several occasions I had seen many of these men with pieces of rocks in their hands. Only at a very great depth, in the bowels of the earth, can such pieces of rocks be found. Pieces as large as they can hold in the palm of their hand. Rocks (stones) of different colors hard near to Diamond. I have never seen such rocks (stones) before, nor after the completion of the construction. They became an industry during the construction days. They were sent up to the States; cut and polished; and returned to the Isthmus as Canal Stones! Among them were Moss Agate, Moon Stones; (Two of which I have on display); others the color of a full ripe tomato; and many other colors including blood stones. All Canal Stones. A Blood Stone does not mean that the stone is red as blood. A blood stone is the color of a very green lime, with small red spots not larger than the point of a pen. Women in those days who likes jewelry felt that they must have a Canal Stone ring. You could purchase one in any jewelry store on this Isthmus. Burgoon the American jeweller had many. I had mounted many in gold. For those women who likes jewelry, having a Canal Stone ring was a must which any Old Timer of the Construction days will attest. Their are a few of them who has made this Isthmus their home. The present generation knows nothing about Canal Stones.

To them, its a bed time story, or a fairy tale. For curiosity, I have been around all the jewelry stores in Colon, asking, "Do you have any Canal Stone rings." No is the answer. I dont need any. I have a few. Petrify shark teeth from Culebra Cut and Canal Stones are gone with the completion of the Construction. Because no barracks nor quarters could be built fast enough for such a great number of employes. They had to live somwheres. This was where the house owners in Panama City and Colon were taking a disadvantage in charging exorbitant prices for one room, much more two rooms apartment. Thanks to George W. Goethals who knew the condition, and had barracks and quarters built for the employes of the Panama Canal. The Store Keeper of the Cristobal Commisary, whose name was Belaskie, had a dispute with a salesman, whose name is Fowler (now in the States). The altercation began in the Hardware department, which was divided with my department with an open space of few feet. During the dispute, he kicked Fowler. The salesman said to him, "Kick me again" He kicked him the second time. The salesman did not try to defend himself. Kick me the third time said Fowler. Belaslaki (the StoreKeeper) kicked him for the third time. Aparently, that was all their was to it. The occurence was reported higher up, and Belaskie was fired from his job as Storekeeper, and given forty eight hours to leave the Canal Zone. Bevington whose death I read in the Star & Herald about three months ago had been working in my department at the time when it ocured. Bevington was young at the time, like myself. I had thought he had left for the States, like many other Old Timers who I remember sometimes. This Belaskie was not liked in the Commisary by Gold nor Silver employes. Gatun has taken many lives also; but not as Culebra nor Bas Obispo. It was nothing unusual to be walking on Front Steet and sudenly you sees a yard engine with one I.C.C. flat car attached with dead men stretched out, whose faces cannot be seen, because a piece of clean white canvas, the length of the car covers their faces, moving slowly towards the old Colon Freight house to the north end near the Washington Hotel and stops. The people in the vicinity gathers, including myself, trying to get a glimpse of their faces. You can't. The canvas covers their faces. A police man is on duty to prevents the people from going too near. Not only once but on several occasions, these dead men on flat cars their faces covered up, were carried to near the end of the Rail Road tracks near the Washington Hotel. Colon Hospital was around the Beach in those days. For sure, these dead men were from Gatun, on the Atlantic side, which had its death toll as did the Pacific side of the Isthmus, I hada seen a piece of mechanisim that was being used in the constuction of the Locks at Gatun. They were called buckets. I am describing what I

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had seen on the Atlantic, as I lives on the Atlantic side, although not forgetting the Pacific in reference to construction; from the Pacific to the Atlantic, and from the Atlantic to the Pacific. The buckets were used in the construction of the Locks. They were like those old steam shovels which are now seen between Gamboa and Miraflores (excepting the teeth), large enough to hold four to five men, running on large steel cable wires, sixty to seventy feet from the ground, going as far as a city block. They could be seen by passengers on the Rail Road train. Looking at those (not more than four) men, you are looking at death in their company. "You better believe it" For sure; one of those cables got broken carrying all to their death, and there were others to take their places without hesitation. Not once but twice it happened. It was a sad comment, (I can remember) in the whole construction area. I had been told that those men were paid a very high salary for that kind of work. No wonder they were replaced without difficulty. The Canal Record always publishes such occurrences in those days.

I will write once more, if God permits, then conclude before November 1st.

REGINALD BECKFORD

If you does not receive another, you will know that I have passed on

The construction of the Panama Canal was very much advanced. Living near the sea from where I must see a ship or ships every day unless I am sick. I had been observing for a long time a white (small) ship not larger than the S.S. Advance of the Panama Rail Road line. (I used to go aboard the S.S. Advance and Alianca for mails from the Purser) This white ship had been sailing continuously from the (Mole) narrow channel south of Sherman which leads to Gatun, to the Breakwater not more than a mile and a half and return to the ("Mole") channel. The word "Mole" is used by Old Time fishermen and natives. This white boat had been sailing this short distance for approximately a year before it had me puzzled, sailing days and nights; could be easily seen at night by the light, going no farther than the Breakwater and return to the narrow channel. Needless to describe that this continuous sailing had been going on for almost three years, I was determine to know the purpose. So I did. Finally I was told that the small white ship is the dredge Culebra (by name) is a suction dredge which is dredging the entrance to the Canal, thereby making it deeper for larger ships of deep draft which are expected to transit the Canal. This ship (dredge) was a familiar sight in the Harbour of Colon unlike a dredge, which remains stationary, but sailing day and night for approximately three to four years. Familiar sight to passenger ships. Approximately three to four years sailing (dredging) for not more than about a mile and a half; day and night, from the narrow channel to the south of Sherman to the breakwater. One day while I was looking out in harbour, as I usaly does, I saw that their was something missing. The white ship (dredge) Culebra, that familiar sight in the Harbour of Colon, was seen no more. It was like puting the finishing touches on a good job that had been well done, The Construction of the Panama Canal. I repeat. I have been living near the Harbour of Colon all my life. This gives me the privilege and oportunity of seeing the movement of ships. The continuous dredging of the Harbour brought up hundreds of beautiful shells from the bottom of the sea, and far deeper. They were scattered all along the beaches. I have never seen such beautiful shells (stones for they were not hollow like shells) before nor after the Construction (never). They were picked up by children and adults for their beauty. I personally have mounted a few in gold, as earrings I will give you a description. They are half-round. The shape of a half of a lime, or a tea cup. Solid. Not hollow like shells. The oval side of the half lime, or

the bottom of the tea cup which is oval, gives a lustre like a real pearl. That part of the lime which has been out, or the top of the cup, is lily white. Their sizes not larger than a (man's) shirt button. Occasionally you may find a few a little larger. After the completion of dredging, they were not so plentiful. Finally they disappeared from the beaches. Gone with the dredging of the Construction days. In those days, you could walk anywhere in the Construction area without restriction. Myself and friends walked on the Locks twice during its construction. During the Construction days, the Americans were very friendly, especially the women. (For example) An American teen aged girl far up in her teens at that time, whose parents were living in the second cottage in Old Cristobal, exactly where the Canal Zone fire station was only a few years ago. Only a stone throw from the Commissary. Because of its proximity to the Commissary, she comes more than once a day to purchase. Her name is Florence from Charleston S.C. She was one of many who may converse a little before being waited on. Her mother also. I am giving you a synopsis. I had been living between fourth and fifth streets with my mother. We both were inside the room upstairs. As late as around 8/30 that night, I had heard a feminine voice inquiring for a dress maker. I came out to see who she was. She was Florence from Old Cristobal. (Surprised) "Florence what are you doing this way?" I had asked. Looking for my dressmaker she retorted. I told her that there is no dress maker on this building. She told me the name of her dress maker whom I knew at the time, and I took her there. Afterwards it had me thinking how she had walk alone from Old Cristobal in the Canal Zone at the crossing at eleven street to fifth street in Colon, seven blocks from her home, around 8/30 at night. At the opening of the Panama Canal, I used to do jewelry repair work. An American by the name of Pheobe O'Donell from Paducah Kentucky passes the shop almost every day in going home from work. In returning from work one day she came in the shop and gave me a job. "Will you please repair this for me? After telling her what it will cost to do the work, she said to me, "If you dont see me pass this way tomorrow, will you please take it to the Garfield House around the beach, the women's quarters, and ask for Pheobe O Donell." She did not return the following day. I had forgotten to take it to the Garfield House as she had requested. The third day she came for her jewelry and told me that she had been waiting and did not see me. She then took a number on a raffle. Another day, an American woman came in. "Can you do this job for me while I wait?" I said yes. "I want to get back home before my husband reaches home, he is Cap-

tain of the Port" "Have you a chair" certainly I said. I gave her a chair, and she sat for fifteen minutes until the job was done. I am only describing to you the Construction days Americans. Many U.S. soldiers could be seen in the Colon Park on Sunday nights, as the old Fort De Lesseps is very near the Park. I was showered with confette on a Carnival night in the Colon Park by Florence who had been walking with her escort. The distance from Old Cristobal at 11 Street to the Colon Park is seven blocks. They are the Americans of the Construction days. You can be sure that which has been written had been seen and more, except the deers and other wild animals that were runing to high altitude to escape the rushing waters of the Atlantic and the Pacific at the time when the Dike was blasted. I lives on the Atlantic side. I knows nothing about the Pacific side. No man nor woman alive can contradict what I have described. If their is one, I am ready to meet him or her. Canal Zone policeman (Frank) from New Orleans died not very long (I had read in the Star & Herald). Known as Policeman 88 was very popular on both sides of the Border. I had eleven years of (broken) service. Two years as a messenger at the I.C.C. building #1 (the Balboa heights in the early Construction days) Three years as mail clerk for the Panama Canal, and six years at the Commisary. Not a very long time. Nevedless the eleven years of service was a great privilege as if it had been fifty years. (I will describe) When my father died I became the only support of my mother. She became ill that she could not use her right arm. I took her to a doctor in Colon. He told me it would cost me \$40.00 to get her better and \$20.00 for a nurse. I considered it exorbitant. Being young and having no money saved as yet, I would have paid \$100.00 or more for my mother if I had it at the time. As a mother I know that I could never repay her for what she had done for me. Both of us lives alone and she is suffering. I decided to take her to the Colon Hopital. I told my mother to get ready to go. She replied "It's useless because I am not working for the Panama Canal nor the Panama Rail at this time." I said to my mother "I am taking you their." And so I did. After I had gone in, and sat a few minutes, the doctor came to me. I told him she is my mother. "Are you working for the Fanama Canal" No sir, I replied. "Have you never worked for the Panama Canal" "Yes sir," Eleven years. Seeing me taking out my papers to atest, he began to examine her sick arm. We sat their for some time. Finally a nurse returned with a bottle of medicine with direction on how use same. And gave me. I used the medicine as directed, and my mother's right arm was cured in two.

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weeks. At the time when I was working at the retail cold storage (Commissary) a Austrian American had been coming to the retail cold storage for many months, and whenever he comes, he buys a pound of bologna sausage, sometimes half a pound. That was all he buys for almost a year. Once, sometimes twice in a week. It was fun for us two sales men. Sometimes we have it prepared before he calls for it. He came in one day and said to us (two salesmen) "Well this is my last day for bologna sausage, I will be leaving for the States tomorrow." "Why dont you take me with you, said the other saleman, I would like to know the States" "Oh no, I would not take you to States, we dont want fellows like you in the State where I belong." "Why not" he did not elaborate. "I would take that other fellow" referring to me and he said "goodbye." This is my own handwriting. Hoping that you have read my first, second, and last series with interest as they are real facts. I now conclude.

Respectfully yours  
REGINALD BECKFORD  
Jeweller

Beckles, Wesley; Estafeta Chilibre, Chilibre, R.P.

I arrived here in Panama in the year 1913 January 9th. The very next day of the same year I got a job in the Municipal Division. Worked in the casing hole which was 100 ft. deep until 1914. That was at Ancon. Then was transferred to Pedro Miguel (Same Municipal Division) until 1956 when I got retired. I've worked with S. Boyd, Mr. Clement, Mr. Ralph Carthurs. At that time we were paid the sum of 10 cents an hour. In those days there were so much filth in Central Ave Panama that we had to take it up by bucketsful, and empty it in the sea. In those days a loaf of Bread was only 4¢. I was living on the Canal Zone, in Red Tank. I was a bachelor then. Many is the times I've had to work from 6:00 in the morning until 7:00 A.M. the following morning. One of the experiences that is most vivid to me is the time when we had to work Albrook Air Base laying pipeline in mud up to our waist, and thats on the level. Living conditions weren't so good that time. Due to the fact of the small salary. Many of the Days I've gone to work with hunger. Well, in the year 1956 I retired and I'm now getting a small pension from the Gov. of which I'm extremely grateful.

Respectfully Yours  
Mr. WESLEY BECKLES

Belgrave, Allan C.; Box 1624, Colon, R.P.

I arrived in Panama a Sunday at 330 P.M. the 12th of September 1905. A group of us were taken in mule wagons to Camp in Old Cristobal, (Kaki tents for Camps) these were erected near a swa mp of alligators, frogs, and mosquitoes in abundance.

Monday the 13th I start to work for the engineers division in Cristobal under #1 office near Columbus Statue before it removed to Colon, that site is now occupied between the freight house and #10 pier. As a carpenter, I were put to work to cut and point stakes for the engineers, one Mr. Evans was in charge he was quite a gentleman, his speech was gentle, and understandable. I worked with him for two weeks, the following week I was transfered to a carpenters gang, foreman's name can't remember, but he was of a different temperament to the other man, he was rough, and so he could curse, I could only work with him six and a half days, malaria fever began to worry me, I went to the rest camp, got quinine treatment for two days, I return to work the fourth day, could only work two hours, six to eight, fever and my bowels took me in such a way that I had to be taken back to the rest camp, My condition began to get worse, then the doctor sent me off to the hospital with eight other sick, we were admitted, but our wards were tents, the few wood buildings were filled, then around eight o'clock the same night the doctor came to me he sat on the cot; may I say here, the cot had on it a nice mattress, and sheets (2) one to lay on and the other to cover, and a pillow. The doctor question me as to how my feelings were, I told him, #2 if I had chills? #3 how my times my bowels move for the day? #4 where I works, and kind of work? 5 what kind of food? 6 who prepares it? 7 does you work in the sun and rain answer in the affirmative now he examined me thoroughly and leave, about ten o'clock the doctor came with another doctor, they examined over again and leave, nine o'clock the nurse gave me two kind of medicines, the following morning I felt a litte better, eight o'clock the doctor on his rounds came to me and asked how I was feeling, I told him a little better, he said to me Stay in bed, and told the nurse to see to it that I don't get out of bed. I had to remain in bed two weeks before I could go outside. In the third week the doctor told me I can sit up in a wheelchair, then I ask him his name, and he told me doctor Beverly, the nurse name Miss Byers, both of them were kind and courteous. The fourth week I was discharged, on leaving the doctor told me to be careful

in what I eat, and don't get wet, of course I knew this was impossible, because we had to work in sun and rain, when it rain for more than fifteen minutes our time would be cut according to the duration of the rain. Twelve days after I returned to work I was stricken again with the same troubles malaria and dysentery, this time I meet with another doctor and nurse (name doctor Taylor and nurse Smith they were equally nice people. They did their best for me, when I began convelesing, doctor Taylor with doctor Eno said to me one morning Belgrave would you like to work for the hospital? before I could make up my mind to answer, doctor Taylor said to me if you go back to work you won't last very long, so I answered in the affirmative, he said you can work for a few months in the hospital; you will be out of the rain, and we can check on you more often, when the doctor was about to discharge me, that morning, he brought Major Lee Superintendent, and Miss Fritchard chief nurse to my bed, and they said the same thing over again of what the doctor told me, I thanked them for their kind consideration. all this happened during the early months of 1906. from thence I began to work for the health division up to 1909. I got married, I need more money to support a family, during that period my salary was \$20 with subsistence. I must say here, that, during the period I worked in the hospital, I work with Dr. Nolan Chief Surgeon in the dressing room, and so I came in contact with some very liberal minded white men, one of them by name James Woodside, one day while attending to him, he questioned me about where I'm from, how I liked the Isthmus, how long was I working in the hospital and many other questions, at the end he asked me if I would like to work for him? I asked him what kind of work? he said that he was a boiler-maker and shipfitter foreman at the mount hope dry dock, so I said yes sir, and then again he said I'll be out of hospital in a few days and I'll let you know, so it did happened, I gave a week notice, the week following I met Mr. Woodside at his office and he employed me as a boiler maker helper at 12¢ per hour 10 hrs. per day, start work at 6 A.M. to 11:00 A.M. and from 1:00 P.M. to 5:00 P.M. Employment began on or about the middle of January 1910 through 1914 - August 25th. closed the Canal Construction, or in other words, the opening of the Canal for business.

Experiences. (1) The way in which Colonel Gorgas improved the health conditions on the Isthmus, through his ingenuity, places that were a harbinger for alligators, frogs, toads, and worst of all, man's most inveterate enemy the mosquito that create yellow fever, and malaria fever, were transformed into

Belgrave, A. C. - p.3

habitable areas.

2 - The rapid way in which the then Construction Quartermaster erected proper housing for all Canal employees.

3 - For people, those that I got in contact with, Some were pleasant to get along with, and others were to the contrary.

4 - Living and working conditions (personal) was not favorable, (reason) The boiler-makers and shipfitters fought for shorter working hours, and an increase in pay, they won, ten hours was changed to eight hours per day, from 7 o'clock in the morning to 11 o'clock, and from midday 12 o'clock to 4 o'clock in the evening, with the understanding that, any time worked after 8 hours will be overtime (time and a half). The helpers had to worked 8 hours, but whenever called to work after 8 hours, had to work straight 10 hours before getting overtime. So, when there was no overtime which was seldom, I found living conditions difficult, even when commodities were at reasonable prices, because of inadequate salary, I was unable to support my family properly.

ALLAN C. BELGRAVE

Berisford, G. Mitchell; Estefeta Chorrillo, Aptdo 6104,  
Panama, R.P.

I am giving to you at this time thanking God for the opportunity to do same. Dear Sir I am giving you the truth of my experience during the time of my employ in the Canal Zone Sir I came to the soil of Panama from Barbados landed in Cristobal docks on the 21st of April 1909 between 1 to 2 pm with the last trip of the S.S. Solent I was taken care of in the Cristobal camps then my first work was at Mindie railroad working with Mr. Busby the foreman, acting as water boy at 7 cents per hour for a period of time then my elder brother took me to tavanilla section where he seek a job for me in the mess kitchen peeling potatoes but I could not stand the smell of the vearias pots they gave me bad feelings so I had to leave and went on the dump as yard's boy carrying reports to the Engineers, but a pair of shoes could not last me longer than two weeks on the account of the thick mud and water so I had to leave that job. then return back to Colon and gotted work on the docks — working ship side. After many months I came in contact with a friend and he took me to a foreman in the timber yard of Cristobal and I work there as water boy. One day one of the workmen was hewing out a timber to a certin size so he left it and went to the sirvice, so boys all over put down my bucket with the water took the adds which he was cutting the timber with and start to finish what he leave off and I did the job so clean and perfect when the man came from the sirvice he saw me standing a distent from the timber he open his eyes wide saying who who trouble my work, useing funney words and it is done better than if I did it, but I never knew that the foreman was watching me through his office window, so neither of the men would say any thing but the foreman came out of the office and told him this boy did it and he did a better job than you too. So the foreman turn to me and said if you can get an adds to buy bring one tomorrow and throw that bucket away you are a good little workman he ask me where I learn to use an adds and I told him my elder brother use an adds and I told him my elder brother taught me in Barbados. And from then I started at the carpenter's trade, from 7 cents to 13 cents and I work then for a period of time. Then I went to Toropoint and work with Mister Hearn's building the brake water bridge working in front of the pile driver handling piles one day Mr. Hearn's came over to where I was working talking to the Engineer resting his hand on the top of the pile forget and give the Engineer the singnel to drive not remembering his hand was on top of the pile and the hammer came down and cut his fingers off. He drop to the floor and we the men pick him up with other white men and rush him to

the Hospital all he could of done is to call for cigirets chewing them in his mouth packs after packs before he could reach the hospital. Then a few days after that Mr. Hutchen the pile foreman drop over board inter the sea and he was a very ougly man whitch he said so of himself when rise from the water raising his head up his workmen started to laugh seeing how ougly he was, when he gotted to himself he went to the subforeman a coulard man name Herbert telling him you laugh at me in the water because I am ougly. If you dident had so many starving little children home I would of fire you and give you a bad clearance; go ~~xxx~~ to work you pãor gie. Then I went and work with Mr. Patchet carpenter foreman in New Cristobal working on the school and other buildings one day on Commisary book iskuse he went and gotted our books place them in his back pocket and would not give us; 4 oclock he took them home and sitting around the dinner table his wife saw them in his back pocket she ask him if those are the poor men books and he said yes and she said to him get up at once and go to the train station and give those poor men their books most of them live in Panama and their poor wives and children is waiting on them for a bread, and you come home sitting down to table to eat and the poor men need their books you dont eat here untill those poor men get their books, he had to go.the train station and give every man our books before the train pulls off; the maid let us know what had happen on monday when we came back to work. Then I transfer to Mr. Merther, another carpenter foreman after a time transfer to Mr. Gump, finishing the schools Then lay off and I went with Mr. Spearman working on pair 4. Leave there and went over to Old Cristobal with him and remove the Dutch concrete building from one side of the street over to the other side about over 300 hundred feet away from where it was. It was one of the most experance jobs you could ever see, on rollers and timbers with turn buckle people from all parts of the isthmas came to witness even from Balboa Hights. When finish we all transfer back to Panama. Went at Gamboa build up Gamboa Commisary, Club house, schools, and dispensary, there where I gotted a nother fame by regulating the slate board at the school. I was recommend to a raise from some officials came down from Balboa Hights. When Gamboa was finish transfer back to Balboa on the school where I was left in charge of the finishing by Mr. Spearman the foreman my last work there was putting up the letters naming Balboa High School. Then Mr. Handson working foreman under Mr. Spearman, I went with him to Ancon and there I work on the Clubhouse one day I gotted my Commisary book, 10.00 and my wife came for it to spend,

Berisford, G. M. - p.3

she went to the Commissary and bought cake and ice cream and went home gotted her friends and had a spree over me, when I went home the evening I saw the ice cream dishes what they use and the crumbs of cake all over the table, not a crumb leave for me, pots cold, stove cold, and no dinner, and she was away, hungry killing me and nothing to eat, great ex-pearance, I had to make a devorce on her. Later I was call to the office for a transfer to Ancon section carpenter for the quarters, I work with many foremans there Mr. Cloud, Mr. Roberson, Mr. Moris, Mr. Danaby, went back with Mr. Corri-gan and Mr. Corrigan there with him I gotted my retirement, November the last day (1957) with a great regret of a send off so I have to thank God for my spear life though many days I had to stuff paper in my dinner bag to make it look like lunch because my wages was very small. At that time I was only working for small wages 7 cents 10, 13¢ 16¢ an so on many days I had to take lunch from the other men who was getting more than me, and in those days I work almost the lines through, the most of men lives was at Colebra, Empire, Mattachin, and Gatune, the flesh of men flew in the air like birds many days johncrows feed on the bowels of men around the jungles around 1914 when the water was let into the Locks from the spillway it was a great holiday and a celled-bracion for the work men white and black.---Then-we-the-collord men oompose a song about General Gothels, it goes like this ) Gothels, Gothels His name shall ever call, He was the principla constructure who came from the States Mc Clinolef and Marshal who bild the gates, there are seven-ty five feet high, no man could never denie, so the water display, from the mouth of spillway through the locks and dam..... Last but not leace, in 1941 to 1945 working day and night suporting the War II I was awarded with a certificate from Major General U.S. Army Governor as vetteran Pardon me (I forgot) working at old Cristobal with Mr. Spear-man I felt from the top of an elevator 65 feet high, dammaging with cuts on my left leg, a fractured risk and a cut on my chin and three eight penney nails inter my hip from my nail bag which I had around my waist. I was rush to Colon Hospital by Mrl Hanson car, because the ambalance took too long to reach the job. That happen around 1928 to 1929. So my dear Sir I have plenty to thank God for that my life is still speared to see this day I have plenty to thank the Ameridans for. I have to say you all are blessed people a nation which God bless, and to you Sir I hope through my rough toils and my experances of the Panama Canal work that the Lord may send us a blessing for our hard toiling, and that you may see fit to give me one of your prizes. May God bless America you and your family. Remaining your

pationate servent always

BERISFORD / G. MITCHELL

retiree war vetterant

Booth, Charles; Colon Post Office, Colon, R.P.

In the year 1911 I arrived in Panama. date not remember  
1 year 1912 January I start work for Panama Canal as tool boy  
for stardrill. My work is of all kind, look after tool second  
get the time book at 7 o'clock. Next where I can get grass go  
look for it to plug the stardrill old. 9 hours a day at 7 cent  
a hours life was hard but what must I do. Keep working on till  
make a change as helper for stardrill. from 7 cent to 9 cent a  
hours in Empire Cut. From second to the last out at Empire cut  
I still have to take time book back to the office; Then stranfor  
come to leave Empire Cut 1913 to gamboa dike. leading stardrill  
gang to gamboa - Marterchin then my pay went up to 10 cent.

Where we drell old 75 feet deep & 80 feet deep to let  
Shargreas water water enter the canal 1914. Mr Editor to see  
the earth move God knows where earth gose. It was a great day  
when all the great men from state to see the dike blass.

There was a flud pipe at the bottom of the Canal and the  
day when to blass the dike, 75 tun crean was their, one of the  
great man f U.S.A. send me Chas Booth, an 2 others to make fast  
with cable to the pipe.

It was great to see water pass through pipe. 3 of us order  
to run upon down picking up store \_\_\_\_\_ upon down as mad  
man. On top of the bank of the canal they catch our pitchur  
en when return each get a dollers. Then after that the swich  
was on. Water gone to a eight

Alandtic - Pasefic water met throught undie work of U.S.A.  
on by the healp of the great Lord that to day the is at Large  
is living through U.S.A. God bless U.S.A. I Charles Booth now  
only geting 33 dollers 65.

Mr Editor I leave my I my life in your hand to see if you  
can see with me for a 15 dollers more to healp me on. Nothing  
I have to say I am wating on your repply. Trusting these word  
may met your approval

Bowen, Samuel N.; Estafeta Parque Lefevre, Panama, R.P.

I leave Barbados on January 07 Land in Panama on 15.  
Started to work on the 16 First place Tabernilla Forman Mr  
           work Rail Road next Gatun 1908 Mr Mackine work Rail  
Road Mr Keller Gatun Locks and Dam Pedro Miguel 1914 Mr.  
Sampson Locks and Dam untill retired. In those days  
experances was great. Conditions were rough we had to have a  
ticket to get the food. Without that ticket we could not eat  
or sleep. Many other places of work But I think that this is  
the most important part. I am

SAMUEL N BOWEN

Boyce, Clement C.; P.O. Box 1270, Colon, Republic of Panama.

Arrived in Panama August 1909, assigned to work August 11th as a bush clearer, at the now Gatun Lake; later to the Gatun Spillway as a carpenter, with one Mr. Keeter Overseer, didn't keep a complete record of the time, but it went to years — then to the Gatun locks where the foundation was Steam Shoveled, preparing forms and culverts, a very dangerous job with overhead cranes and concrete buckets swinging; sometimes the buckets dropped accidentally killing some, and injuring others, breaking forms and sweeping to a distance; an awful sight.

Many were killed, many injured, Greeks, Spaniards, West Indians, and others. At last the forms were set in place, concrete poured and the walls shapped, with much loss of life and labor. Through all of this time we had many changes in officers; with General Goethels, Major Jarvis and others; At last the Gatun locks were completed, with many lives lost and property destroyed. But I was spared through all of the great dangers; I thank God and am grateful for my existence until today.

After the Gatun bridges were completed in the fore bay, I was transferred to Balboa with one Mr. Bill Inman. Started building of docks, transferred again to the Defunct Cooling Plant at Cristobal; there I had a narrow escape of death, which took one life, and the broken leg of the foreman, Mr. Larry Lodge on a floating crane setting a buoy at the break water.

Things were near finishing now and I was transferred to the then Building Division, with Mr. Kirbys Floating gang at the town site of New Cristobal; there I worked at Silver City Heights, which ended in 1927; I got a job at the Mt. Hope Cold Storage and was retired from the commissary Division, after being there for 22 years.

Thus ended my career in 1949.

Yrs Trly  
CLEMENT C. BOYCE

Bramble, Manley; Estafeta Parque Lefebvre, Panama, R.P.

From a injury claim.

While I was working in Empire cut in the month of March 1913 with a Boss name of Albert, ripping up track lines, and repairing and burning polines, at the rate of ten cents per hour, and you have to work as a toss job you are doing, if not the Boss said to you go home, give me your check you are no good. One day I was very tired, eleven oclock came to have dinner I went under some side dump cars which was left upond a side switch, and after I finish eat I fell asleep, with my jacket fold up on the iron rail as a pillow I fell some thing touch me, I made a big jump from under the car, and at the same time I saw the wheel of the dump car out my jacket right in two pieces it was a day which I will never forget. My last day was at Empire bridge when the water was place into the Canal.

Many thanks.  
MANLEY BRAMBLE

Brewster, Joseph; c/o P.C. Box 361, Colon, R.P.

Urged with the desire to travel and to earn a living, I left the Island of Barbados, on Royal Mail "Solan", and arrived in the City of Colon, Rep. of Panama, on May 1, 1906. I was only 16 years old.

Immediately on my arrival I went to work at Peter Miguel, on the track lines, under the supervision of Mr. Little, who had as his assistant, one Mr. Miller, commonly known as "One Hand Miller." These men were both American Citizens. On this job I worked for a couple of years. At that time in order to maintain our health against malaria and dysentery, which were taking the lives of the workers daily, we were given quinine liquid, twice a day. The quinine was carried to the camps by members of the health department, and were transported in canteens carried on the backs of the dispenser. Each section had a rest house to which workers at the slightest sign of dysentery were carried, and a mess hall where the workers were fed. I can remember seeing Gen. Geo. Goethals and Major Gaillard visiting our camps daily, and we at times would observe them standing on "Gold Hill", now called "Contractor's Hill", overlooking the men at work digging the Big Ditch.

During these days each employee provided himself with a small bottle containing kerosene and coconut oil, which was rubbed on the exposed parts of their bodies to keep away sandflies and mosquitos. Our drinking water was usually boiled before using.

Carrying dynamite powder for a man called Cushing, an American, I fell and had my knee fractured. After my recovery was transferred to the electrical department, as a blasting wireman helper, under the supervision of Mr. Spiker, whose foreman was Mr. Lipton.

I recollect on one occasion shovel 210 fell over covering 6 men. The crane had to be brought to raise this shovel. All the men died. I was transferred to a place called Diablo, as machinist helper, about the year 1908, working under Mr. English, as machinist helper, and did pipe fitting work with him. Mr. English was transferred to the Cristobal Coaling Station and

Brewster, J. - p.2

took me along with him. At the Coaling Station Mr. McFarlane was supervisor and Mr. Morgan his assistant. The work done there was the digging of caissons for the building of the Coaling Plant. Our work was to look after the "Emerson" pumps. Many lives were taken in the building of the caissons. After many years of work at the Coaling Station I was promoted foreman for reloaders (those who fill coals on ships).

During the 1922, worked as wiper on the "Tavernilla", and thereafter transferred to the boathouse under supervision of Capt. Westcott. When President Theo. Roosevelt came here on his inspection of the cut, I was one of the workers who operated the pump car, carrying him from Culebra to Empire.

During the digging of the cut, we had rain every day. The workers had difficulty keeping their clothes dry. We worked rain or shine, day and night. It was Pres. Roosevelt, if I remember well, who recommended that a dry-house be built in every section so that the men would be able to have their clothes dried for replacement. During these days the Ancon hospital maintained a hearse drawn by two horses, to convey the dead through the day, to the cemetery.

While at the boat house I had the pleasure of taking several Congressmen on trips to the Chagres. I had the opportunity of working while the Prince of Wales and a Governor General of Canada, on different occasions, of course, were taken to the Chagres Spillways.

While at the boat house I served under the following Port Captains: Westcott, McNair, Junker, Schmidt, Simmerton, O'Leary, Parson. After having passed several years working on the U.S. "Rodman", where I had the pleasure of attending Governor Schley and many other Governors of the Panama Canal, retired under Capt. Schmidt, in 1954.

JOSEPH BREWSTER

Brown, Lessep O.; J. Arosemena Street, Box 4673 (Balboa?  
Panama?), c/o J. A. Williams.

I, Lessep O. Brown, Born in Panama of West Indian Parents.

Started to work 1904 as Water Boy up to about 1905 in the Track Gang Then I was shifted over as Switch Tender and Flagman from around 1905 to 1906. In 1906 between November and December as Brakeman in the I.C.C. with Yardmasters, Barnett and Coban. After it was called Transportation Division. The Yard Office was at Paraiso, at that time I ran Brake up to around 1910.

When the big wreck around Diablo Curve with Engines 289 and 262, I was the Brakeman on Engine 289, the name of the Conductor on Engine 289 was Anderson. Engine 289 was shoving 18 Ledgerwood Cars loaded and bound for Balboa ran into Engine 262 that was waiting around the Curve for clearance to Balboa also, with a load of Ledgerwood cars.

The Engine 262 was thrown into the Ditch from the impact, some of the Cars also went down with her into the bulrush as the result of the accident.

As I was standing in the center of the train looking out, I sighted the danger, I had to jump for my life.

At that time I was going by the name of Joseph Brown. I was then terminated after three days. Between 1910 and 1912 I was then reemployed over in the Pacific Division, at Miraflores under Yardmasters: J. J. C-Moore, Boyd, Thompson and Penman, and W. J. Holms, Trainmaster.

I was then reemployed in the Pacific Division at Miraflores as Brakeman, and worked on Engine 297. I also worked as Flagman at Corozal Tower. Dispatching trains from various Tracks. There my name was changed from Joseph Brown to Lessep O. Brown which is my correct name.

After the Pacific Division was transferred to Balboa I went back braking I also worked on Engine 204, that was between 1913 to 1914, I also worked on the Transmission Line painting Gang.

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1914 I was reemployed in the Dredging Division in the Survey Department. There I continued in active service up until May the 31, 1954, when I was retired as "Physical Disability."

Respectfully submitted yours,  
LESSEP O. BROWN  
DR #6406

#### SUPPLEMENT

In the year 1904 when I started to work as Water Boy. It was at the Dump on the West side of Paraiso.

Then around 1905 I still work as Water Boy between Cocoracha and Paraiso which is the east side of the Canal. The Foreman at that time was Mr. Degley.

I cannot definitely remember what year the train yard and Office were shifted to Pedro Miguel, but at the time of the wreck the Train Yard and Office were at Pedro Miguel.

Brownie, Norton; M St., Casa 10-46, Apt. 30, Panama, R.P.

This is a blite idea from what I experiaces on my arrival in year 1906 Feby 22nd. This is a true story, I was placed to work in Canal to work with the steam shovel, I am glad to state that I were able to stick to that class of work until it was completed.

Then I was sent to work on the Locks, as a carpenter, I am very proud to say the living at that time wasn't very pleasant, I came wet to my home and leave for work in rain, during this time I was attach to the powder gangs working in Cut myself & others very early in morning we were preparing holes to blast.

When we heard alarm we ran to see what had happened, to my surprise seen one head were off and others injured. That is my experience it Continue to work until they retired me. (One man who head were off, his name Forbes, Foreman)

I beg to remain  
Yrs Fraternally  
NORTON BROWNIE

Bunting, Isaiah; \_\_\_\_\_ Bendita, Chilibre, R.P.

I receive your note. I am very glad. Well the first. No 1. When I did come on the in 1910. I start to work at Gamboa high way. The first job. In 10 or 11. I was only 19 ears old, working pick an shuvel at the rate at 10 ¢ a hour rasing tracks and laying up on and down all around.

My forman name was Mr Relleney. I dont know if spell it right. But is straw boss is name was will cock or lee cock. Well from that I leave and go to Golgona Machine Shop at Bass Matachin. In the foundry shop the secon (2) time I got a job with Mr. Boyed, a molder helper. Is secon is name was Mr. Smith. Well i go on with that. Carring hot mettle in the evening. I got burn a cople times. Take me to the hospital. And I got heel. Well I went back to work at the job. Working fine and till they put me out side to clean up casten with a small gun an my tools. In the even go to casten in side. Well I work there an till 1914 when time to put water in the Canal. And they stranfor us to Laboca foundry sam at empire dare. Because the was not all ready, then when it is finish the rest of us up there. Well I work there on till word com in. Then they start to laid off us, and stranfor some to Colon machine shop, cuting down wages. Well sir I drop in the fire. Well I started to run and run a round. But could pick up. But at last I went up the Sagre River wher they have a plantation whare they call the lemon plantion at Gatun secin No. 3. Well I got a job there. Farm work grubbing and plogin. I a job kitchen elper, from there they put me and the othr side of the river with plow men an tractor are working. The name of the boses was Mr. Forgeson and Mr. Secret then comes Mr Spear an Mr. Durvin. Well I worked with one of the tractor men, itching on and drop off, an then the boss take me away an put me to run a electric pump for the veteble the i work an work and till thy take me again an put me and the stawn gang from Gatun to Gamboa. With colored man is name was Smith. Carring suply from the far to Gamboa and buyin up Commissery goods on bages with a lance called the Dority. And from that they stranfar me again to captin on the same lance with Manuel Galban, then now I got to stay at Wamina plantation. Mr. Snage for he was the boss of the lanches. Why they worry me so much I was a good man belo the water. Diving. Once Mr Spear was loding a tracter to go

out. Was a bany season [or "\_\_\_\_\_ seas on"?]. On some mich-  
futun the tractor went over bord in the Sagre. Is a good thing  
I was standing by at the same time. He add on a clock and as  
he was going over with the tractor I grab on the clock and pull  
him bac with me. Now then who as to go and do that job down  
under the water Is Bunting sir. That why they dont keep study  
at on place at all. Men fight for me in gangs white and black.  
Then know when all those jobs close down, lay off and give out  
to Conters contrac No. 4. Then I go to maddam dam and work  
there. With Mr. Marbry chief enger. And Mr Mechel. under  
falling and grubbing. Making road from camps to camps. They  
forman was Joe Ewin a black man he runs the owl gangs. Bouth  
matac or axe. asses and dymit. I work along with him for a  
few weeks and he put me as a pussher under him as a helper.  
Making tral for diman drills an small drills, making trails and  
roads to take them throu. And from ther up to sanjuan cleaning  
up all river bases both water an land up to Culabra criok, finish  
everything an come back to maden dam. And got laid off, finish  
all jobs. Then, Contras come in and laying down fondation, dry  
the Sagre and start to work, then who as start the jobs leave  
out like a out of a river. Joe Edwin stranfor to Pedmegel to  
Mr. R. A. Cauthers, he was the general formen over all jobs.  
Then joe ewin enterjuse him to, and he send for me, because I  
was a very good man on a jackhammer. That was the 5 job I do  
and Panama Canal, now take me to lacoba Soso hill, to drill  
start drilling, some tines runing pans car some time feed the  
cruss all around. Now thing getting low again. Laying off  
com again

escuse my righten because I only have one eyes. I can  
berly see, but prase God I am still living

Mr Cambley Surpendend take me to Gamboa, when they was  
putting down foundation, he put me over the driging gan. Jack  
hammer cutting cutting and making Drawns. Water and toilet  
drain then every thing was finish again, laying off. Well I  
run and run around, an till I met a friend name of peet working  
at Gatun mess all bying stuff for the mess, he say to Bunting  
boy the stuard want a good elper in the kitchen let take a  
wark I sed off. The of the boss was C. A. Miller. And the  
sturday name was Mr. Henry. Then I start in working as a  
elper in 3 weeks I first cook. That was 6 job on the Panama  
Canal. Then I work and work my way up on till they stranfor me  
at the new mess handling over 3 or 4 thousand of men feeding.  
The bosses was new, But I got to \_\_\_\_\_ with them, and they care

Bunting, I. - p.3

for me. That was Mr Shaffs and Mr Amlet, and I was along with them an till them get a sranfar to the ablo eigh at balboa eigh and they took me along with them. That was the 7 and I work there an till they leve, and I there. Changing stuward, then come Mr fry, an he goes to then come Mr. Magna. Then I give up the gost no more all through war \_\_\_\_\_ I alone in that clubhouse, an the lord, black out com all night me an the lord, antill the war finish, working there alone is 5-7 month. Then I thnaks uncle sam what he asadone for me from I was a boy at 19 up to 45 - God be with you all for ever and ever I hope the lord may keep all wepons from you all armen

I remain yours truly old man  
ISAIAH BUNTING

I cant see much, one eye

Burton, Eutace

I came to Panama in 1899 and in 1907. I work at Rio Grande dam as a water boy with the water service in Rio Grande. My ICC was 12896. Then in Culebra at Gold Hill with \_\_\_\_\_ English as a water boy in 1908 at Impire train yard as awter boy. 1910 and 1911 as a switchtenda in Culebra Cut at that time the Gold Hill lide came down to the cut in 1911 and 1912 the rocks came down from the hill of the west bank men workin under the hill were killed while many more were truck by flyin rocks the Basol-bispo explsno the greatest accident that as occurred in the canal in December 1908 twenty six people were kille and a dozen were permanently maimed the Lirio bridge that crosses the canal at Lirio Black Swamp lies about five miles south of Gatun and is known as Black Swamp The tunnel at Mirafiores is 736 long 15 feet wide 21½ high above the tops of the rails. In 1914 I worked on Dock 4

EUTACE BURTON 8506

Butcher, John Oswald; Apartado 7719, Panama, R.P.

I landed in Colon on January 12, 1906 from the island of Barbados and traveled by train to Paraiso, the first place of my Isthmian living, to be with a cousin who was employed as a painter in Culebra. On January 16, I made my first attempt to look for a job and was successful to be employed in Culebra as a plumber helper -- a job which I held until June, 1950 when I retired from active duty with the Panama Canal Constructing Division.

My first "boss" was Mr. Kenney. There were several others -- Mr. Hearn, Harry Otis, Bill Brisco, Getman, Edward T. Nolan. Mr. Nolan, now retired and living in Los Angeles, California, still writes me regularly and never fails to send me greeting cards on my birthday and at Christmas. I remember Capt. R. E. Wood as quartermaster and Mr. Walter D. Smith, assistant quartermaster. Mr. Smith was a real pusher. He always promised permanent work to the better workmen. Hearing this, I tried my best to work harder and more than anyone else. Carpenters, plumbers, electricians, painters -- all accepted this challenge but of course, as far as plumbers were concerned there were none better than the Nolan-Butcher team. Through hard work, we excelled in whatever jobs we were assigned.

We worked from Gatun to Tavernilla, then later putting up houses in the Ancon area. Ancon in those early days was nothing like the Ancon we know today. Part of the area which now surrounds St. Luke's Cathedral was the hospital grounds. The laundry was in the area of the present Payroll Bureau. Right near that was Morgan's Flower Gardens. If one continued in the general direction of the present Corgas Hospital, you would come to the community then known as Bishop's Hollow where the U.S. citizens resided. Housing for all employees was under the Department of Labor and Quarters which was in effect from 1904 until about 1908 when it was renamed Quartermaster Department. It was headed by a Col. DeVall. His assistant was a Lt. R. E. Woods, who later became Chief Quartermaster and remained so until the beginning of the first World War in 1914. The old corral and the mental hospital were all found in the same general direction. In due course of time these people and landmarks were transferred to other parts of the Canal Zone, bringing on the gradual transformation we have today.

What was called a commissary was located in Balboa near the spot that now has the bachelor building on Barnebey Street, and right beside this, the quartermaster's office. From this point in 1909-1912, one could look at what is now La Boca but would see only water (the Pacific Ocean). We would watch the dump trains and flat cars carry stone and dirt from other places, including Quarry Heights, to fill the land for what is now beautiful La Boca.

Removal of the dead began in 1912. Corpses were taken from the cemetery which was on the site of the present Administration Building, and taken to Corozal which was being opened then. The first set of West Indian workers were moved to La Boca in October, 1913 and the second set in November, 1913. Arthur DuSaire, Bossiers, and John Eastmond, a policeman, were among the first. Next batch included Clifton Chandler and John Butcher. Most of the original residents are now deceased. I feel blessed to be still alive and chipping strong.

During that time there were only 6 family-houses in La Boca. Four were two-story frame houses and accomodated 8 families each. Two were four-family cottages. There was an outside wash-house, and an outside bathroom since there were no indoor baths. Although there were some kind of paved roads, one did not dare go outside at night from one house to the next without a lantern for between the houses were sharp rocks and rubbish of various kinds.

Houses which were built along the "lines" in the very early 1900's were then transferred from all over in box cars to the new La Boca. The first school was built in 1913 and the original teachers were mainly from the West Indies. Mr. Innis, now deceased, was the first principal in the new community for West Indian employees.

In later years when there were insufficient family quarters in Balboa, some of the houses in a certain street in La Boca were improved in order to house some U.S. rate families. Hence the name "gold" street for what later was named Trinidad Street. At that time U.S. citizens were called "gold" employees and they were actually paid in gold coins during the construction years. Non-U.S. citizens were referred to as "silver" employees and were paid with silver coins.

The train stops were more and different from the present ones. Culebra, Empire, Las Cascadas, Obispo, Gorgona were

Butcher, J. O. - p.3

among the good old train stations or train stops. Some of these went under water after the opening of the canal or the building of the Madden Dam; however, Balboa, Pedro Miguel, Gamboa, Frijoles and Gatun are still in existence.

I worked approximately 14 hours daily during the building of the Administration Building. During 1906 I was transported daily by train from Culebra to cut up what is known as piglead for use in plumbing work. Most of those houses on which we worked are now taken down or sold. Some of the landmarks that are still existing include the Tivoli Hotel, now called the Tivoli Guest House and the Miraflores Electric Plant (1913). Just about the only remaining family 1906 model still standing is the one in which the District Judge lives. During the building of this house I worked with Mr. Kenney. The foreman plumber in Ancon at that time was Mr. Carter.

As a husky, strong, active, young man who was never afraid of work, I was always in demand. I still have the joy of just knowing that there are so few of those early houses on which I did not work. I have worked all over the Canal Zone wherever workers were needed and even as far as Porto Bello and Cape Malo. Some of the district quartermasters under whom I worked in the early days and prior to 1914 when water entered the Canal were: Roy Watson of Old Cristobal (worked with him twice); Bob Gamble of Gatun; J. H. K. Humphrey of Tavernilla and San Pablo; H. C. Shady of Gorgona (also worked with him twice); John H. King of Las Cascadas (worked with him twice in Las Cascadas and Balboa); Bob Smith of Pedro Miguel; Oliver Farrar of Corozal; R. C. Foole of Ancon (had him twice in Ancon and Balboa); Sedwick of Culebra. I remember Col. C. A. DuVell as chief quartermaster; Capt. R. E. Wood, assistant; and Lt. Walter D. Smith, constructing quartermaster. In 1906 when I arrived here John F. Stevens was chief engineer for the Panama Canal and lived in Culebra.

Mr. Nolan and I walked daily from Ancon to Balboa and La Boca respectively, until the government kindly gave us a mule and a wagon. In 1913 we got a Ford truck but were unable to move it over Balboa Heights Hill as we did not know how to use the clutch. Back to the corral we pushed it and created quite a lot of fun for the machinists who had to explain the use of a clutch and show us how to drive. Actually, neither Mr. Nolan or myself knew how to drive. This would never happen today, would it?

Butcher, J. O. - p.4

There were many sad accidents. I once saw three workmen at Culebra lumber yard who sat on a railroad track under a boxcar to eat their lunch. Since there was a daily two-hour lunch period, they fell asleep after lunch napping with the hope of getting up for return to duty. Before awaking however, an engineer started to move the cars to another line and unknowingly, killed all three of them. Another similar accident happened in the same area, but this time the victim heard the engine. This poor Chinaman in attempting to escape got his body mangled in the wheels of the train. His head severed and I actually heard his voice cry out "ya ya."

The first road to Gamboa, or in fact the first trail was built by Culebra prisoners going through Paraiso Hill in 1908. An experience I will never forget was the big explosion in Bas Obispo on December 12, 1908 which killed many people. As I recall those horrible construction days, that were so full of sacrifices and hardships, I firmly believe that all of the West Indian survivors and particularly those who contributed so much of themselves before water was let into the Canal should always be especially remembered and kindly treated.

Food was difficult to get from private restaurants. This made life unusually rough for bachelors — and there were so many of them. Most of us came from our homelands in search of work and improvement. We turned out to be pioneers in a foreign land.

The Panama Canal employee was always able to eat since there were mess halls along the "lines" wherever work was going on. Each employee only had to present his meal ticket and in turn was fed a meal of cooked rice which was hard enough to shoot down, sauce spread all over the rice, and a slab of meat which many men either spent an hour trying to chew or eventually threw away because it was too hard. Along with our rice and meat each one was handed a loaf of bread which seemed so tasty with our metal cup of coffee. Three meals a day cost only .27. Since there were no luxuries, there were no tables so we either sat on the ground or remained standing to eat. There was lots of malaria fever. Sick men were taken to the hospital on dump trucks and needless to say how very many of them died before the sanitation we now enjoy was made possible. Thanks to Gen. William C. Corgas and his medical skill.

When the Administration Building and Headquarters of the Isthmian Canal was moved from Culebra to Balboa Heights in

Butcher, J. C. - p.5

1913 and 1914, the dismantling of all the construction towns along the Canal was begun. The buildings were cut in sections and transported on flat cars by railroad from Gorgona, Culebra, Empire and Obispo, to such towns as Corozal, La Boca, and Balboa. The men on this work assignment were known as the "traveling gangs." This was a time when men were proud of their ability to turn out more than a good day's work.

The names of those men who were rated Foreman Carpenters were: Johnny Haynes, B. C. Quisby, J. B. Fields, father of our present Rev. J. B. Fields, Ed Gallagher, Jerry Kirby, William Murtaugh, Ernest Harrod, and others. Naturally there were other crafts represented — plumbers, painters, roofers, electricians, etc. The most prominent team among the plumbers as mentioned earlier in my paper, was the pair that turned out a four-family house, roughed in, tested, and completed in ten days — Nolan-Butcher as plumber-helper.

How well I recall the strike of 1920. Employees refused to go to work in demand for higher wages. Even with butter at about .30 per pound and coffee at .25 per pound, the salaries of .10, .12, .15 per hour proved inadequate for a man wanting to live decently. Anyone who did not report to work was evicted without delay. I was rather fortunate when the quarter-master boss and police officer came around to evict all employees at home. He turned out to be one of my own "bosses" who gave me the choice of removing rather than be thrown out. In a short while, however, I was right back in my job and quarters which were freshly painted, and here I remained until my retirement. Many of the West Indians left at that time for Cuba and the United States.

Looking back, I feel that in my many years here I have made a very definite contribution to the building of the Panama Canal. I feel proud of my family consisting of my wife and four daughters all of whom were born and mostly reared in La Boca. I must add that I am still annoyed to say that I have no pin nor official memento that I can proudly and justly show as an appreciation ~~xxxx~~ received for my 44 years of faithful service. I feel this way for all West Indian oldtimers who retired prior to 1950. I also feel that we should be given the opportunity of enjoying something we helped to build — the Panama Canal and the Locks. I do not refer to the Cut, but the Locks.

Cadogan, Samuel; no address, postmarked Colon, R.P.

Start with the P.R.P. labor in the year 1907 in Corozal  
sec. Panama.

CADOGAN S.

Carmichael, Leslie; General Delivery, Colon Post Office,  
Colon, R.P.

On reaching Panama in January of 1907, I was taken to one of the old French camps located on the Chagres river. The following day we were taken to Tabernilla.

Tabernilla was a small section where the work was started through dense jungles, the tools given to us were a pick, shovel and machette, from there we were cutting brambles, trees through swamp lands, across rivers, the condition was of such that from day to day we were wet leaving the job and returning the following day with nothing dry to wear.

The first foreman I worked with I don't remember his name, there were two other foremen Mr. Loftes and Mr. Greenstage who were preparing the land for dumping from Tabernilla to Frijoles Mr. Bob Sheetz was also there.

The work was dangerous we had to be always looking for snakes which were plentiful and deadly, lions which roamed the jungle in packs, also tigers. The tigers were the most ferocious.

An experience that I have always remembered the time while the gang were laying rails, we were short of drinking water I was among the men sent to get a supply to be taken from the Chagres river, we were to use a pump car to carry the eight five gallon cans and a fifty gallon barrel. On our way we were followed by about ten lions running behind the car, they were getting closer and closer to us while holding the barrel with one hand to steady it I took one of the cans and used to scare them off by hitting it to make a noise that drove them away.

Water to drink was very hard to get to supply so much men that were working after we had gone so far in the jungle, there were times when we would lie on our stomach and drink whatever water in sight to quench our thirst, by drinking water that way a lot of the workers died from black fever and yellow fever for there was no other way that water could be acquired.

The work was hard and dangerous with the sight of men

Carmichael, L.

falling sick and dying from day to days at that time still on the rails with such hardships around us a little ditty was sung "Somebody dying every day," another was "Hard work today Ba Congreja," with those and "Iron Bar" the men would work in harmony lifting and hauling rails, setting and spiking in place for the dump cars.

Respectfully  
Mr LESLIE CARMICHAEL

Carr, Handel; #2387, Apt. 6, 4th St., Rio Abajo, Panama, R.P.

Entered into the Isthmian Canal the 10th of Aug 1911  
I work in the water way Running Star Drill in Empire also and  
roads in Balboa

living is very hard. I was burn by fire in Panama

I am asking for a letter help and also a fire victim in  
Panama \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ out of clothing and shoes also.

I need plenty of help I am not getting much retirment  
\$29.00

Chambers, Robert T.; General Delivery, Colon P.O., Colon, R.P.

I booked passage on the Royal Mail Steamer "Magdalena" which sailed from Kingston, Jamaica, B.W.I., Friday, Feby. 21st, 1913, and arrived in Cristobal Sunday Feby 23rd 1913. There was a strike of Hotel waiters in the I.C.C. Hotels and the Management were looking out for men to fill the Gaps. Myself and several other fellows were taken on for "Gorgona Hotel" as waiters. I worked there for a couple of months, but the conditions did not suit me so I quit. I was determined to get a job of some kind. I was walking along the Railroad Track and met up with a Railroad Gang at work and the Foreman took me on and set me to work right away. That was no easy going, no bed of roses. From 7 am to 4 P.M. at 10¢ per hour, in Sun & Rain. Sometimes we found ourselves working, not even a gust of wind blowing, covered with Perspiration dripping down when all of a sudden a heavy downpour of Rain on us no where to get a shelter, drenched to the skin & had to stay that way till quitting time. We then board our Pump Cars to take us home to Camp. On several occasions going to or from work we see Train Signals & the Train coming so close toward us that we bearly have time to jump off and 4 men grab the Trolley Car off the Track with not a minute to spare before the Train dashes by. During the Rainy Months of the year I was sent out as Night Watchman from 6 P.M. to 6 A.M. to watch along certain parts of the R.R. Track where rocks & Boulders might get loose & come down to block the Track. In those days the Health Dept issue Quinine to the men to keep away Fever etc. We could get a \$2.50 Soupon Book to purchase Food Stuff, etc. in the Comsy. 1 Loaf of Bread for 4¢. Rice, sugar, etc. at low prices. Not now.

After water was let in the Canal, sections after sections had to be abandoned and R.R. Tracks had to be taken up. Here again we R.R. men had a tough job. We had to go through water and mud carrying Rails with Rail Tongs to load on Flat Cars to be taken to places of safety. While of the R.R. Section Gang, there was a vacancy for a Porter at Gatun R.R. Station and I was selected from a Gang of 23 men to fill that vacancy. I got on that job in 1924 & served under many Station Agents from Porter to Station Helper, till the last Station Master was removed. I spent 28 years at that Station till my retirement in 1952. All through 4 years of World War No 2 I was on duty there. Now I can say thanks to God for keeping me & that God

Chambers, R. T. - p.2

bless U.S.A. that she continue to feed the World.

Respectfully  
ROBERT T. CHAMBERS  
D.R. 5372

Chase, Leonard A.; Gamboa Post Office, Gamboa, C.Z.

I arrived March 22 - 1906 at Gorgona and start to work the 23 at Basmatterchin loading cars with stones, and working on track line, moving rails, pushing cars. Then the name changed from Basmatterchin Shop to Gorgona Shop, at this the rate was 10¢ per hour, we had to take meal tickets to get your meals, 30¢, leaving us .50 proper a day. Then I work in the power plan as oiler and as fireman, Blow the whistle to start, and to come off. The boss was Mr. O. Sand Berg

Citronello, St. Justo F. ; Estafeta Pueblo Nuevo, Panama, R.P.

I came to the Isthmus in the year 1907, on the 11th of April.

I started working for the "Water Service Division" in 1908. I worked for the Sanitary Department about the same year. The work closed down in 1909; and I was employed by the "Dredging Division" for a few months and started working for the "Mechanical Division" in 1910 thru 1949, when I was retired. I work as a Blacksmith, Boilermaker, Pipe Fitter & Hose Repairer. During those years from 1908 to 1949 I was never fired; I was transfered from one job to the other. My working experience was very cordial almost with all my co-workers and supervisors. I had no trouble, to God be the Glory.

Yours very truly  
ST. JUSTO F. CITRONELLO

Clarke, Aaron; D.R. #6580; Colon Post Office, R.P.

I arrived at Dock #2, known as the Royal Mail Dock at Colon on a Monday morning December 17, 1906; was placed on board a train and taken to Gatun. We got off the train at Gatun north of Jamaica town, a section where people lived east of the Panama Rail Road track. We were told to take any of our baggage that we could handle conveniently; and anything that was heavy to leave, as it would be taken care of by the Labour and Quarters Dept. We were escorted over a large pasture of land, crossed a ditch made by two steam shovels No. 102 and 104, the first making its first cut to provide a railroad track so that the other shovel traveling behind could load the material in Oliver dump cars used at that time, until later they was replaced by a heavier and larger type known as Western Dump. The ditch mentioned above grew to be the Gatun Cut, and later became the (Gatun Locks) Atlantic Locks. In referring to the pasture that I had crossed we reached the camps; were the first laborers of non United States citizen to dwell in houses built by the Isthmian Canal Commission in Gatun. Our predecessors lived in tents. After the Authorities saw that each of us had had a bunk, we journeyed back the way we had come and taken to a mess kitchen and given each of us an enamel plate and cup also a spoon; we then formed a line and was served with rice and red beans with beef and gravy of some sort also tea and bread, the meals was of very low standard as far as cooking was concerned. After dinner the Authorities approach us and selected twenty-five of us for the Building and Construction Department. So I went to work the same day I arrived here in the lumber yard my immediate foreman's name was Mr. L V. Thomas, the Superintendent Mr. W. H Storm. My first metal check was a diamond shape No. 54074 So I worked for the Bldg and Constrn Dept until the job was terminated about the middle part of 1907. The water we drank during that time was sterilized; the place where it was sterilized was situated about three quarters of a mile south of Gatun old railroad station, and pumped in a tank south of the first hotel that was in Gatun; it was there the majority of people got their drinking water. The Labour and Quarters Dept had a mule cart that carried water around to the several United States citizen quarters until the reservoir was instituted at St Hope which furnish the Atlantic side residents with water. Later a reservoir was built at Agua Clara to reinforce the amount of water for the use of Atlantic residents whose number had greatly increased. Sometime in 1910 while working at No 1 Concrete Mixture which was then situated on the west bank and is now the middle level of

Clarke, A. - p.2

Gatun Locks where the Locomotive shed and toilet is now situated; I was going toward the cement shed when I passed a man, soon after something caused me to look back and was in time to see the said man fell on the third rail (rail carrying electric current) a car No 5, the first to be equipped with trolley poles to run from overhead wires was approaching him I shouted and ran to his assistance but the car overtook him and had pushed him about eight or ten feet and had stopped just as I reached the car, I reversed the switch but the car was dead the power being off. Myself and others pushed the car off him he was taken to a first aid station south of the Power Plant when the doctor stated one of his hands (I dont remember whether it was his right or left hand) was broken two places and a cut in his head he was rushed to Colon Hospital immediately; about three months after I was called to the Administration Building in Gatun to the Claim Agent's Office and asked to give a statement of what I had seen happen to that man at the time of the accident! I did so, and was told by the Claim Officer that my statement had agreed with my former testimony, but the reason for calling me, the man had said he was blast by dynamite. Some time at a later date I was working in a gang cleaning, oiling, and greasing the cars which ran on the Automatic Rail Road to carry the cement, sand, and gravel to the No 1 Mixture our working hours was from 11 o'clock A.M. to 7 o'clock P.M. and one evening some time after five o'clock P.M. I heard a thump and when I looked I saw a man by the name of Francis Hoyte was lying on the third rails I shouted a man is on the third rail the boss was standing near the switch and he pulled it, it was just about a minute but when we lifted him from the rail he was dead, you see he recieved a tripple shock, first struck by the overhead wires by an iron bar he had had in his hand to dig out the hard substance that accumulated in the cars from time to time during the day, second from the shock of the third rail on which he fell; (the third rails were first installed to convey the current to the cars for their opporation) and third the heavy blow he recieved on the back part of his head when he fell on the third rails caused his death immediately. After my service with the Building and Construction Dept had terminated I worked a little time in Hindi with the Eng and Constn Department the name of the Supervisor was Mr. Clarke, but I did not stay there very long my next employment was with the Sanitary Dept under the Supervision of Mr. Brady I dug ditches dropped mosquito oil made drains, dug graves acted as pall bearer and sometimes when we could afford the time I performed a short religious ceremony. My experience as far as I can remember I will go back to my life in the camps and that goes

for all of us who was living there. The camps was fitted with bunks for normal accommodation for eighty four men, and if pressed for accommodation twelve more men were added. In those days the latrine or out office for sanitary convenience was about one hundred and seventy five feet from some of the camps, you were not allowed to use a bason or any other ~~XXXXXX~~ utensil in the camp so you can imagine the hardship and difficulties that we encountered in those days especially on nights when the rain was falling. We were not charged any fee for quarters or medical services, but was supposed to eat at the mess kitchen, every evening after work the foreman gave each man a ticket, that ticket was good for your supper said evening and would also serve as a lodging check in case the policeman and watchman came around at night as very often they did; also you was furnish breakfast and dinner the following day with the ticket you had recieved the previous day after which it was destroyed. You were given a ticket each day from monday to friday while on Saturdays you recieve two tickets, or should a holiday occur you was also given a ticket to cover the holiday. As I had mention above you didn't pay for living in the camps but you better be sure to have a lodging check if the police and watchman come around for they didnt accept excuses and once taken away you were charged for loitering and the magistrate showed no sympathy, most of the time it was thirty days in jail for such offense. Tis true at that time work was plentiful but some men suffered so badly from fever and was so ignorant to shun the hospital that many times they fell victims through their own errors, fever in those days played a havoc of men, for I ~~indeed~~ landed here on the 17th day of December 1906 and on the 31st December 1906 I was in Colon Hospital, but although I have had fever several times the longest time I had spent with fever was ten days. The signal for out light at 9 oclock P.M. was given by knocking an old angle bar kept at the kitchen for that purpose. During ~~XXXXXX~~ those early days you could get work any place, but although fever attack many men yet there were men who were callous of work and a police officer whose name was Mr. Smith (~~XXXXXX~~) (Ginger) it was his delight to track down men who were not working whether they were sick or lazy, and if proven well they suffered the penalty Mr. Smith used to ride a roan pony that seemed to be up to all tricks, but as the years roll on things changed some men lived in the camps and provided their own meals and was not molested. I endured the life living in the camp until sometime in 1908 I went and lived in New Gatun west of where the Third Locks cut was made, the convenience for sanitary facilities was alright but I still had a tough job especially with my laundry more particular

Clarke, A. - p.4

when the rainy season was on sometimes I had two or three suits of clothes working all wet not a dry piece to put on when morning came for I to go to work. But the majority of us used a scheme to put on those wet clothes, that is we took the clothes to the bath room with us and immediately leaving the shower without drying our skin we put the wet clothes on, took our breakfast and was off to work for another day of hard toil. Now coming to the late period of Construction days About 1913 and 1914 work was scarce, because most of the construction was completed, McClintic Marshall Construction Company who built and hang the gates was practically finish, even the Bridge Company who built the emergency dams was completed, so men wandered here and there in search of work; and very often was arrested by policemen for loitering and when placed before the magistrate who never used reason in those day, they were sent to prison. I remember one morning I went out looking a job not hearing anything I pass by the present Rail Road Station at Gatun myself and another man, and when we was nearing the bridge I heard a whistle and turned in the direction the sound had come from and saw it was a policeman, I placed my right hand to my stomach in a manner implying if its me he wanted, he (the policeman) pointed to my companion, so I in turn told my companion the policeman wanted him, as the policeman was coming our way we waited until he reached us. He ask my companion if he was working? He (my companion) said no! The policeman in turn told him to come and let the Serjeant know why he is not working So the policeman took him another course while I kept on home and when I heard from him again I learned he was serving a term of thirty days in jail, I really never knew what was his surname but I used to hear the folks call him Arnie. Such is what I can truthfully tell you of my experience during the construction days of the Isthmian ~~Canal~~ Canal Commission which in later years gained the name of Panama Canal from which I was retired May 31 - 1954 from the Atlantic Locks my D.R. No is 6580

Respectfully submitted  
AARON CLARKE

Clarke, Amos E.; House No. 5061 #R.6; 64 Central Avenue;  
Colon, R.P.

I Amos E. Clarke, a native and citizen of the Republic of Panama, also a 48 years employee, up to June 30, 1954, desire to tell the story of my experience and service in the Isthmian Canal Commission. I use this term, because this was its first name. I do thank God for the sparing of my life to see the past and the present.

I'm also thankful to the U.S. Government for such kind consideration for the old-timers. My first experience was on May 4, 1904, when I heard the first whistle blast out to start work. Some of the old french workers and other nationalities such as Jamaican and a few native, danced and jumped about 2 feet high when they understood that the American Government were incharge of the new undertaking. This took place at Bas Matachin (proper Bajo Matachin). The name of this place was change later to as Gorgona Mechanical Division which was headquarters for all mechanical undertaking of the Panama Canal. On May 4, 1904 about 7:45 A.M. men, including French, Jamaicans and a few natives were taken on to work with machetes to cut down bushes and jungles around the French materials.

White and Colored Americans were the first to start cutting down jungles and bushes. They came from the States with blue jungarees and khaki pants, and wore derby hats on their heads. In those days there were no restaurants. Two colored women carried trays on their heads with hot coffee, bread and butter, to the work-place in the morning time, price 10¢ U.S. currency. The name of these two Jamaican women, one Marian Cunningham and one Caroline Lowe. These women have died long-ago. Mrs. Caroline Lowe, live 110 years. Mrs. Marian Cunningham live 75 years. In 1905 large number of West Indian, Greek, Italians and Spain Spaniards were contracted to work for the Panama Canal. Chiefly west indians, Barbadians. Over 36 thousand men were employed during construction days.

...  
During the construction days more than 75 trains a day moving up and down, dragging ledgerwood cars, with rocks and canal excavated dirt. It was something marvelous to see these trains moving (speeding) up and down to places to be fill in for further usage. Wages in those days were not very high. The highest pay for White and Colored American was from \$65.00 to \$75.00 per month (U.S. Cu.). West Indians were paid 10¢ per hour (U.S. C.), Italians, Greeks and Spaniards 20¢ per hr.

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(U.S. Cy). Limited time of work in those days was 10 hours. Wages were paid in "Gold Coin." The natives did not care much to work for the Canal, so aliens were employed. Sanitation played a great part for the construction of the Canal. Men carried oil cans on their backs with connected hose, spraying mosquito oil throughout the swamps and jungles, killing millions of mosquitoes daily. Malaria fever was raging in those days, many of the employees died from same. But the good masterpiece of the U.S. sanitation prevented further sickness of malaria from spreading. Hundreds of men died from dynamite explosion. In 1908, 22 tons of dynamite was at Bas Obispo Cut and went off at 11:45 A.M. blowing to pieces over 300 men. Their instral and flesh could be seen hanging on the faraway trees. It was something terrible and awful to look at. The explosion was heard and smoke could be seen 3 miles away from where I was living in Matachin. The shock of the blast knocked offed glasses from tables and shelves in many homes, and some fell to floor in their homes.

I personally worked for 18 yrs. as artisan "A" and 30 yrs. as Canal Sea Man (in other words deckhands). I made 5,330 transit through the Canal as sea man. It was a very tough time working through the Canal. My first trip was on the "Dorothy Looking Batch" and my last trip was on the "SS McCormack."

I would like to mention something about the first launch that was owned by one Mr. Roscoe Seawall, its named was "Spikeedee." He took me with him in the same launch, in 1908 up the Chagres river to Santa Cruz, to interpret Spanish to English. They were three anchors, two large and one small. The two large ones are now at Cristobal in front the terminal building. The other small one, I know nothing of its whereabouts. They were also some of the "Old Spanish Cannon Balls" which were taken from ~~Sxxx~~ Santa Cruz and Porto Bello. Some are now in front the Police station at Cristobal and other places. The ruins of the Old Acient Spanish Church in Santa Cruz can yet be seen. The Indian natives at Santa Cruz told us many things about the Spanish anchors which were there at that time. They told us that the anchors were brought from the Atlantic on raft through the Chagres river by 12 men up to Santa Cruz. They said also the men were dragging the anchor up an incline, and suddenly they fell from down the incline, and the anchors fell upon top of them and kill six men. And that these anchors were supposed to go to the Pacific end by the order of Vasco Nunez de Balboa, through the Old Panama road or trail. But they got discourage and did not go any

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further. Here ends the story about the anchors, as far.

(Something more of the past)

In 1907, about 8:15 A.M. the people in Matachin heard a buzzing in the air, everybody's eyes were looking up to see what it was all about. Some thought it was judgement coming from God upon the land, so they began to pray. But it was nothing like that — it was the first airoplane, that had ascended from Corozal, by a German mechanic or pilot, that flew to Gorgona and returned back to Corozal. It ~~xxxx~~ was the greatest fun in my life to see some of the old people was in frantic about this peculiar scene. When they understood it was an air-o-plane, they began to laugh at their own selves. Here ends this tory of the air-o-plane experience.

...  
(Story of teamsters)

Large American horses and mules were used in the construction days for hauling trucks and fire-wagons. Teamsters were white and colored. This ends the stories of some of my experience. Thanking you for a reward...

AMOS E. CLARKE  
old-timer

Clarke, Samuel; Estafeta del Chorrillo, Entrega General,  
Panama, R.P.

I arrived in Panama on the 27th of August 1909 first place I worked was on the Railroad in Gatun with Mr. Stumps as foreman, after there I was on Gatun Lock with Mr. Smith as foreman, after there in the Lighthouse department Mr. Grovenor as foreman from there to New Cristobal at the Radio Station with Mr. Fuller as foreman and also Mr. Michal. From there with the Army at Fort Amador in the Officers Quarters around the Circle as a Carpenter with Sgt. Anderson as foreman; from there at Balboa High School as janitor with Mr. King as foreman from there at the Naval Radio Station at Amador as carpenter and other necessaries needed with Mr. McCollin as foreman also Mr. Fisher and Latimore from there in the Canal as carpenter and mason with Mr. Jacob and Mr. Smith as foremen.

Some of the foremen were very polite, while some were very rough and impolite. Working conditions were fair.

Nothing else for the moment

I am respectfully,  
SAMUEL CLARKE

Clarke, Wesley; Colon, R.P.

I, Joseph Graham, came to Panama in the year 1911. I landed here on the 7th of August and went to work the very day after dinner. I worked from then on with that name as Joseph Graham until 1929 when the Governor had all who were not working with their right name change to the correct one. Therefore, my experience with the Canal was when I was working with the above name.

I experienced in those days working in the year 1913 on Miraflores Locks and also experienced the day they blew the dyke. I stood up and watched the water coming down looking for it to come with plenty power but it did'nt. It took its own time and came down gradually until it reached the guard gate and started rising slowly until it reached its mark.

My right name, changed from Joseph Graham, is Wesley Clarke DR No. 4997, Colon, R.P.

WESLEY D. CLARKE

Clayton, H. B.; Estafeta #1, Panama City, R.P.

H. B. Clayton who was born October 23, 1892 in the town-site of Gorgona Canal Zone of West Indian parentage gives his experiences of the construction of the Panama Canal, one of the greatest engineering feats accomplished. I had the honor of knowing the late Colonel Goethals, Colonel Gillard, Mr. Miller, Mr. Little, all aides of colonel Goethals. As a young boy I went to work as a waterboy for A. R. Stone Supt., with the I.C.C. ... I witnessed the explosion in Bas Obispo in 1909, the exact month and date I cannot now recall, many persons were killed. In the same year two engines collided, engine No. 615 and 611; I.C.C. engines, which was engaged in hauling dirt out of the "Big Ditch" most of the dirt that was excavated was dumped in Balboa and Flamengo Island. Headquarters of the Panama Canal was at Culebra it was later moved to Balboa at its present site. The slide at Gold Hill gave Mr. Miller, Little and Colonel Gillard a big headache, every morning many cubic feet of dirt came down the hill and blocked everything, steam shovels were even covered up. ~~At night we would catch~~ engine off and head for the Roundhouse on returning the next morning we might meet the ledgerwood or dump wagons all covered up. At that time malaria fever was rampant 40 or 50 men a day died from the effects of malaria, hospitals or rest houses were built at Empire, Culebra, and Paraiso, trains coming into Panama daily was always full of patients heading for the old Ancon Hospital. A little yellow fever was around but it was quickly brought under control by Colonel Gorgas, the Chief Health Officer of the Canal Zone. Quinine was the order of the day, it was brought right on the job to you. Many persons were killed by explosions and malaria fever. This is a correct statement to the best of my knowledge and memory.

H. B. CLAYTON

Connell, James G. ; Estafa No. 1 Calidonia, Panama, R.P.

I the undersign do hereby write my memories of the Isthmain Construction days. I arrived from my Native Land Barbados in the year 1906 the month of February. My first employment was carrying dynamite powder boxes to the store house in Las Cascadas from box cars then I leave to go to Culebra section and work under John F. Stevens first Engineer before Col. Goethalls as water boy for the carpenters that was building the Administration Bldg. next employed as janitor at the Culebra white school. then janitor in labor 7 quarters in same section. next employment in Gatun 1910 in lock building with electric cars switch men very dangerous job for one year. return to Culebra and work for transportation down in the Canal as switch tender next as tower man directing trains to diferent steam shovels through the instruction of the yard master Mr. Frank R. Roberts & Mr. Mace Gilliam until 1913. Water was put in the Canal from Gamboa dike then to the Pacific side same tower job. Sending big guns by train to Flamingo Island & Naos Island before Amador barracks was built

In the Construction days the headquarters for the engines that drew the trains was at Pedro Miguel & at Las-cadas Pedro Miguel was for the Pacific and Las Cascadas for the Atlantic, western dump train carried stones for the break water and the flat car trains for the Pacific. Albroom Base was swamp land & was dump from the Canal dirt from Culebra there was a place called the Y Switch a right hand train could be put around the Y Switch and become a left train & vice versa and one acuaunted with a Y could explain when its needed for those class of changes to suit the steam shovel in a deep ditch digging ~~the~~ the Yard Master was notified & his instructions was carried out that all my memmo til 1915

Respectfully yours  
JAMES G. CONNELL

Couloote, Mrs. Mary; 90 Street Carrasquilla, House #396,  
Room 5; Estafeta Chorrillo, Ave. A, Panama, R.P.

I came to the Isthmus of Panama 1903 I was a young girl I came with my sister on a ship by the name of la plata it live castries to jamaica then the ship left jamaica at 4 PM o'clock the ship was going to the guaf of Mexico it started to roll it had a storm heavy bfize water came into the ship I was was to go down stairs to second class and stay their the sailor had chain around they waist and a pail emptying out the water when we reach colon they call every body name 5 men where missing from jamaica the captain leg get broken when the life boat brak away and hit the captain on his leg and the life boat drop into sea he was send to the hospital 3 days after he died and we all was sorry. I and my sister whent to Pedro miguel at my mother to live their a cuple years. I feel was to work, has to help my mother, for my brother was geting a small sallary at that time he was working at the Culebra cut.

I whent to the assylum to look for a job at Miraflores I ask the doctor for a job he said I was to young. He ask if I had an elder sister. I told him yes he said to bring her for I am to young has to handle thoes cfazey women so he gave her the job. I go back home I stay for a time. I whent to Empaire I got a job the year of 1907 working for two bacheler doing landry Mr. Stoutie and Mr Zoke I work for a year, and they live and go to the United States I go back to my mother, the year of 1908 I got an other job in Empaire, working for Mrs Jones husband and two children I work 8 months then they go back to the unitted states then back to mother again.

Then the year of 1912 I goted married and living in miraflories in a small cottage my husband was working at the tunel and I use to do sowing for people at home, then it happen a white man came and give every body notice that we have to live for the water is coming throw the canal and I move to panama the year of 1914

MRS MARY COULOOTE

Daniels, Robert S.; Cristobal Post Office, Cristobal, C.Z.

I am sending this memorial with an expectation that if need correction that it will be done in my favour I am memorizing that I came on the Isthmus to work for the I.C.C. I reached on the I.C.C. April 24th 1906 this is to the best of my memory

I.C.C. #24121

Place of work and living was Empire. Mr. Little was General Foreman and Mr Charlie Miller was Foreman the last steam shovel that worked in the Cut was #90 Marion

Worked at Coco Solo Mr Snedegar was Supervisor Mr Charlie Miller Foreman

Worked at the Oiling Plant under Mr Greenwood

Worked at the Coaling Plant under Mr Avery Mr McFarlane Superentendant

Yrs obedient servant  
ROBERT S. DANIELS  
D.R. 1175

De la Rosa, Isaias Antioco; Casa #23, Maria Eugenia, Chilibre,  
R.P.

In the year of 1906 the immigration started to increase on the Isthmus of Panama during the construction of the Canal.

In the refilling of Tabernilla dump No. 1 department I started to work as a waterboy with Mr Green as my foreman for the I C C company in 1907 till 1909.

In 1909 in Cucaracha I worked as waterboy and switcher with Mr. Galliger as my foreman till 1911. From there I passed to Paraiso Municipal Engineer pick and shovel.

In 1911 till 1912 I worked for the construction of Balboa Dike 10 feet of profundity. In 1913 till 1914 I worked on the construction of the new railroad tracks after the Balboa dike was filled with water. I worked as a wagon checker in Frijoles. The water was brought on train in big tanks from the mountains to be given out afterwards to the employers. Our salary was 10¢ an hour. In the system of the work the empty wagons pushed the fill ones.

We made ditches for the dike. The salary was 18¢ an hour. Dynamite were use for the escavation of the dike when necessary and pumps to drain out the water when needed. The compresors were heated by burning lumbers and steam drills for the preasure.

In Rio Grande I worked there breaking rocks for road and construction. As a wagon checker I use to check up to 60 cars per day.

In 1914 till 1915 I worked on the new railroad tracks with Mr. Machnill as pick and shovel from Summit to Gamboa.

ISAIAS ANTIOCO DE LA ROSA  
IP 39154

This is a brief resume of my different jobs I had on the Isthmus until 1915. My participation for the best prize story.

De la Rosa, I. A. - p.2

I'll start by saying where I first worked on the Isthmus. I began on the refilled of Tabernilla dump No. 1, during the excavation of dirt out of the Canal, my job was water boy of the ICC company in 1907 having Mr. Green as supertendent until 1909. From there I passed to Cucaraça during the construction of the Canal as water boy and switch man in 1909 until 1911 having Mr. Galliger as principal boss. In 1911 I passed to Paraiso Municipal Engineer doing pick and shovel with Mr. Boyd as my foreman.

In 1911 to 1912 I worked during the construction of Balboa Dike which had a profundity of 10 ft. In 1913 to 1914 I worked on the new railroad lines as a car checker in Frijoles.

The dificulty with the water was that we had to bring it from a hill 18 ft high filled in tanks on the train afterwards to be able to be given out to the employers.

We worked 9 hours and gained 10 ¢ an hour. As a switcher I had to open the switch in that way the empty car that passed help the fill ones gain force by pushing them.

Making ditches for the dike in Balboa was very dangerous we had to pump out the water and put tubes in it.

In Rio Grande we braked stones for construction material and transport the stones in cars. In a day I use to check up to 60 cars. In 1914 - 1915 I worked on the old railroad as pick and shovel from Summit to Gamboa.

This is a small resume about my working time from 1907 - 1915 on the Isthmus.

ISAIAS ANTICCO DE LA ROSA

Doglass, Bersford

I Bersford Doglass arived on the Istmos Colon R.P. July 2, 1906 Began working July 3, 1906 Gorgona C.Z. Working on track line Forman was Mr. Little. I was transferd to Gatune in 1908 working on piledriver Forman was Mr. Slayback, from piledriving work I was transferd to extevated the East chamber of Gatune Lack. Between the year 1909 and 1910 I was wonded by donmite blass which left my both legs deformed. I return to Pedro Miguel in 1912 this time doing carpenter work with Mr. Hall as forman, from Pedro Miguel to Miraflores doing the same work from miraflores to Balboa Construction Aministration Bilding, then to Fear 18, from 1917 to the coleing Station untill 1932 wen I was Reduc return back to Panama Canal in 1940 work from 1940 to 1947 wen I was retired.

unsigned (signature typed)

Dottin, Alfred E.; Estafeta del Chorrillo, Panama, R.F.

I arrived on the isthmus of Panama on Sept. 20, 1909 with the S.S. Ancon. My first job with the U.S. Government was on November 15 of the same year, as a carpenter, for the Pacific terminals in Pedro Miguel under a fore-man by the name of Mr. Sneed. Other bosses that came and went during my time were: Jim Mayne, George, Perrott, McClean, Scott, Stanford and others.

The working condition in those days were so horrible it would stagger your imagination. I don't think I could ever find words to express the true conditions that existed. Death was our constant companion. I shall never forget the train loads of dead men being carted away daily, as if they were just so much lumber. Malaria with all its horrible meaning in those days was just a household word. I saw mosquitoes, I say this without fear of exaggerating, by the thousands attack one man. There were days that we could only work a few hours because of the high fever racking our bodies--it was a living hell. Finally, typhoid fever got me and I was laid up for 9 weeks in Ancon Hospital hovering between life and death. My fore-man, Mr. Sneed, treated me like a king while I was recuperating. He saw to it that I got plenty of sleep and food--good food I enjoyed it very much. Speaking of food, any man who was living in that era will always cry when he sees the high prices on today's food.

When I came here to work I saw tools that I never saw before in my life such as the Jack Hammer, star drills, steel square, etc., I acquired new skills, such as mixing cement, using the jack-hammer, working the star drills. I had to learn how to cook by force and wash my clothes because of the scarcity of women in the Empire Section of the Canal, where I lived. Sundays was my day and wash day at the same time. The drinking water was so bad that you dared not drink it with out first sterilizing it, and to sterilize the water was one hel of a job. Salaries were fantastically low \$0.16 to \$0.20 was the going rate for hourly employeess with \$0.25 for the sub-foremen. Going to work on the labor train was like mingling with cattle on a drive. If you were ever seen getting of the trains before they stopped you would be arrested and sentenced to 10 days in jail--it was horrible. There were times when we would get soaked in the rain doing a rush job and then right after have to hustle to catch the train home or you would have sleep on

Dottin, A. E. - p.2

the job site. I tell you it was no bed of roses. The slide at Culebra was something that I would like to explain but can't unless there was some way that I could go to the "Cut" and demonstrate. Believe me the men that died in the slide were numbered among the hundreds. My job after the slide was to watch for dump trains. One evening after working overtime in the Canal, four of us were going home walking on the tracks when to our surprise we saw the engine 227 creeping up behind us we just had time to jump into some soft mud 18 inches deep. We were saved by the mercy of God.

In closing, I must say that I am glad to see the changes that has come over the Canal Zone and Panama, I am glad to see the progress that my foster country has made in the field of human justice, I am glad to see how the U.S. Government has progressed in the field of labor relations, which was non-existent in those days, I glad to see that all my sweat, my tears, and all those deaths were not in vain.

I thank you,

God-Bless America!

unsigned

Douglas, Nehemiah E.; Chilibre, R.P.

I left the island of Jamaica in the year 1911 for the Isthmus of Panama.

I arrive on the Isthmus on January 6 of the same year, and began working the following day with the Panama Rail Road Co., at ten cents per hour. I was then residing at Martha Chin. Later, I went with the I.C.C. Deput., and then took up residence in Paraiso, working at Gold Hill in the Power Gang.

At Gold Hill we had to work very hard. We worked in the torrid sun, under the heavy rain, day and night, and the mosquitoes was a plague. The government had to feed us with quinine tonic to save us from malaria. There was also constant danger to our lives. I remember there in Gold Hill where the big explosion took place. It was a very sad experience for all. Many lives were lost, many were injured and had to be taken to the hospital in the little engine. The only reason why I wasn't hurt was because I took shelter under a car of the dump train when the rocks were thrown in the air. The dead were buried right there on the bank of the Canal. But even though the salary was only thirteen cents per hour, the living conditions were not bad.

From Gold Hill I went to Miraflores to work. Here I work in the Spill Way with a foreman by the name of Mr. Ballin. It was here that crane knocked me down broke my skull and cause me to take some stitches, after being rushed to the hospital.

After leaving Miraflores I worked with the Municipal Department, under Mr. Boyd, and moving from that job I was put to work with the Drudging Division. Here I work for four years with favorable conditions.

I would not be surprising to say that those were very rough days, yet I would dare say that it was a privilege for all of us to be consider as the foundationers.

As we gave our time and energy laying the foundation of such a great enterprise, we now boast about. In nearly every places in those days, the men were uneasy, intranquil, fussy and rough. There was always misunderstanding, quarrel and a strife to show some superiority in ability, strength and mental power.

Douglas, N. E. - p.2

Those were rough days with little of sympathy, but as we look back at the circumstances then, we do realize that that was really the beginning of the construction, and so we can sympathize with one another. Sure there were many obstacles and much danger, causing our lives to be in constant danger and possibility of losing it, but the work had to be done. Because of the many lives lost on the construction, the blood that washed the ground and the energy given for the construction of the Canal, we must consider the enterprise the most important and the most costly in Panama.

I remember the time when I was working on a leaf and the cable broke. I was a rigger then in Miraflores. One morning about nine oclock as I was carrying out my duty, the cable broke and killed some men, on the spot. The amount of blood that flowed gave the appearance of a little gully, and when I saw what appeared an island of blood, I got nervous, I think, because how I got down, I do not know; but I got down and ran like never run a man before, straight home in Paraiso. So fast did I run that when I arrived home I heard the whistle giving the knock off signal.

Of course, these are personal experience, but you can imagine what others have experience.

unsigned - name typed

Finn, Enos Augustus; Calle 26 Oeste, Casa 8-22, Cto-8, Panama,  
R.P.

This is to inform you that I came here in 1905 and started working for the Building & Construction Division in Culebra Lumber Yard as checker with W. B. Honey as Foreman, they were building a office for the Sup Henry E. Daily after it was finish I was sent to work for George Perrott as Carpenter at Pedro Miguel. I also work for Mr. Carr who was General Foreman & Engineer in Pedro Miguel I work in the Transformer rooms as helper installing the duck lines for the cables to go thru to the transformer and up to the control house to operate the gates I was at Obispo when lightning hit the wire and set off the holes, many were killed. I saw when the blow the dyke and the stream of water started to fill the canal, in those days it rained day & night no roads only mud. I work in the Administration Building as Messenger from 1918 to 1954 for Johnny Smith as Chief Clerk who died a few years ago they were plenty of sickness mostly fever that took plenty of lives until it was checked by General Corgas my record will show about 46 years of service I work for the Municipal Division with R. W. Husching as foreman building the margeta road & lirio planning mill, also the Panama R. R. Commissary the Officials were John F. Styhson Chief Eng were P.O. Wright Architect, W. M. Bilding Master Builder Mr. Mclean Paymaster. Hackson Smith in charge of the laborer & Quarters H. H. Smith Auditor. I saw the first man that was hang on the gallos in Culebra. It was built by Laborer & Quarters put up by foreman Quimby and drawn by P. C. Wright Architect for the Canal. I knew the ball park in Culebra in front of the Railroad Station. I also remember seeing the cart taking water from the pumping station to the houses, I was in the hospital when Dr. Crabtree was in charge. I also knew the bank when it was in Empire. The mail was brought to the P.C. on horse back from Culebra Station. I was living in Culebra all that time.

Yours Truly  
signature typed

Forde, Rufus Edward; DR 1336; House 4046, Cativa, R.P.

I arrive on the Isthmus of Panama on January 10th 1910 it was on a Monday at 10 o'clock I was taken off the ship, and taken to the Quarantine ground, I remain there for four days, I was taken from there in a labor train to camp totton three miles above Gatun Rail Road station, at that time the new Panama track line was laying down, we went in the camp and the next day we start to work, I work for two weeks, I had to leave there because, myself and the other laborer could not agree, Mr Jones was the General forman and Mr Steel was the track forman they were very good bosses, I went down back to Gatun, and got a job with Mr. Iniss a track forman, he was a West Indian he know the job, I work with him for three month, I left and went down into the second locks and got a job with Mr Grant a channel drill machines that machine drill 14 feet in the ground 14 feet square twelve men work with him, all we had to do was to shift the Rails every time he finished one side, when he finished the four sides, we shift the machine to a next spot. then comes the drilling gang and take over, and start drilling in the center of the square up comes the Powder gan with Mr. Floris as forman, he was a spandard, and start to load the holes with dynammite, when all is ready, he call to the steam shovel engeneer to blow, so as to give notice we are going to blass, when fluris look around, and see every thing look safe he turn to the battery man Corbin and give him the signal, and Corbin press the battery, and every thing goes up in the air, then comes the crane with a bucket and take them out, and load the steel cars, when all the cars is loaded the engine come and pull them out, there are so many engeins at a time in the Cut that most every month, that a man lost hi leg or badly damage, when any thing like that happen one engeneer will turn to next engineer, one just grease the wheel in those days a fowl life was more valuable than our lives. and we work from place to place all over the second locks doing the same work, the camp life was so rought, that I had to go in a place call new Gatun paying five dollers for a room, the hard part of it, when you come from work and take you supper, and resting off, and nine oclock pass and your light is still burning, a Police Officer will come up an say Cut off that light, and go to bed, it is not so much care they want to take of you, they want you to go to be soon, so you will be able to get up soon to go to work, the next thing we had to fight against, was the malaria you turn to work in the morning with a gang about 125 men and by Eleven oclock you will find about 40 men all the others fall down with Malaria the jock about it,

they spin all round like a top before they fall and that get you so frighten that at some times you dont come back after dinner, the cause of all of that, there are men going around with quinine to every gan and give you to drink it is so bitter, that when the next man come around, the gan say we got already, If six men come around for the day, I take six glass, and that is why the malaria keep off of me, then I went to the pipe fitting one day we had some rush work to do and the boss had orders to work right through, we work three day and too night in water to our wast, but the boss was so good that he bring a quart of rum, he will say, boys take a shot before you all goes into the water, and he take a big shot because he had to be into the water, when we finished he said to us boys take the half day off, you all work hard, and see that you all come out in the morning, in the rainy season when rain start to fall some time you dont see sun for about 2 stright weeks I had never saw so much rain in all my life as I see in Gatun Cut, you had to go through the rain, and work all through rain, I rember when I was in the drilling gang, the boss allway say keep the drills agoing, so as to keep your body warm sometimes, you are so cold that your teeth keep nocking together, in the morning you had to put your clothes on damp no sun to dry them, what you are going to do, the men that living from that time should praised God morning noon and night, I left the drilling gang, and back to the pipe fitting gang, when I was tired in one gang, I go to the next, I left the Cut and got a job in the Cement Mixture my job was at a curb watching three lights, the white light for stone, the blue was for san and the red was for cement, the Automatic Cars they run with three rails, the too outside rails the cars run on, the center rail carry the current, it was called the third rail, and when you forgot and stept on it you are a dead man, so many people got kill by it that they had to change it, and put the current over head, that was not so dangerous, I turn to work at five ~~o'clock~~ in the morning, I nock off at nine oclock I turn back at eleven, and work till three during that time, my head is up watching the lights, as any of the light turn on, I send the cars to suit and the other men behind me do the same, the landing is about 200 feet long. I work there for about 1 year. I came back down into the Lock again, and work all around, up comes McClentic and Marshalls to put up the gates, they paid a very good price, and the men leave the Canal like san, but I remain in the same place, moust every month, some one get kill, or 4 to 5 get damage; it was a very dangerous place to work.

Between 12 and 13 the stoney gates valves start to put down, I told a timekeeper by the name of lindsay, I will like to have the experience, about the stony-gate valve, he told me to come with him monday morning, monday morning, I got ready in time to go with him, when we reach on the first lock, he said to Mr Herman this is the man I told you about, that is the man yes that him, he work in a foundry in Trinidad too years, so he must be a good man, so you say, he reply all right boy, when seven oclock blow go down in the hole with the others, seven blow, we had to go down on the bolts that was in the wall, down that 75 feet, that look very dangerous, the first thing we put down was the stem, then after the cross bars Mr Herman come down and show us what to do and we go on working/after a few day I catch on to the job he said to me, you have a quick head, you dint spend too years in the foundary for nothing, I better make you my straw boss, the same thing they call pusher now, after a few weeks, we put on the platform, that is 25 feet from the top then you feel safe, this time I work with out fair, we start to put down the crosshead that work the stem, to put the crosshead together it is a very hard job to do, some machinist had too machinist helper, Mr. Herman had myself and harvey to depend on and they take two or three days to finish one I told Mr Herman that at the second valve, I will take too men and put the crosshead together in one day and a half, he turn me Forde you think that is a Commassary bread, I turn to him, you will see, at last we finished the valve, he told me to empty the tool box, and get the men to take it up to the next hole, and take time and move up the tools and pack them back in the box, so as to be ready to start work monday morning monday morning I was not out to work, Mr Mcflarin, the General forman send a white machines helper to be Mr Herman second, all the me rejoice and say I cant play no more boss seven oclock blow, Mr Herman tell him to take the men and put the stem down, Harvey get read to go down in the valve, the Crane come and pick up the stem, the plank across the valve that he was standing on, not looking at what he was doing, the stem come down and brake the plank in too and down he went in the hole and broke all too leg, the had to send down Harvey with a sling and pul him out of the valve, Mr Herman was so frighten that he told the men to get kerosene oil and wast and clean the rust off the machinery, the stem will put down in the morning when Forde come out, next morning the whistle blow I ask the boys what they were doing they reply a white machinest came here to be Mr Herman second, he go to put down the stem, the plank he was standing on broke in too, and he fall down in the valve and broke his

too leg, they had to take him and send him to Hospital all wright, work on till Mr Herman came when Mr. Herman arrive he said to me what is the matter Forde, I reply nothing sir you was afraid to down the stem, a man got heart so we lay off for the day, all right send for the crane Harvey bring me four plank what you going to do with so many, I reply I am standing on the valve not you, the crane came and pick up the stem, I give the single to the crane man, and when the steam reach ~~the~~ bottom I told harvey to go down and put it in the socket, it did so fast that the crane man said to Mr Herman, he put down the stem faster than you, he spend too years in a foundry in Trinidad so that is nothing he is a good man, I said to harvey take the men and go down and put on the cross bars when all was ready, I went down and put the spirit level on the cross bars, Mr Herman come down and see for your self, Mr Herman come down, go ~~xxx~~ ahead you know the job. in a too weeks time we were ready to put on the platform that left us 25 feet from the top, all right Forde let me see you put the crosshead together in one hour and a half, seven oclock next morning I take two men and down in the hole when eleven oclock blow, we came up the 9 laboures said Mr Herman he is going to beat you to it, Mr Herman laugh, the next day we finished about 2 oclock, Mr Herman went down and lay on his back, and then turn on his side, all right Forde, it is a good job, but the nuts in the corners want tighten a little more, I did so, and finished in too day Forde you did not spend too years in the foundry in Trinidad for nothing, after finishing the third valve, Mr Herman got tranfore to Pedro Miguel, you will like to go with me-forde, I dont know I will tell you know in the morning, so I went home and tell the wife that Mr Herman got tranfore to Pedro Miguel, you will like to go up there no I just got married, and all my family is in Gatun, and I would not like to leave them now, next morning I told Mr Herman I am un able to go, sorry. I will try to get you a good job before I go he went over to the machine shop and had a talk with Mr Perry the boss of the shop, I Tranfore to Pedro Miguel, I have a man by the name of Forde a very good worker, he spend too years in a foundry in Trinidad, and I am asking you for a job in the machine shop for him sorry Mr Herman, we are all fild up, I could give him a place in the car repair shop that is a good place for him Mr Perry said to Mr Fool the boss of the car repair shop, Mr Herman is sending a man over to you by the name of Forde take him on, he came back to the valve all right Forde, report to Mr Fool the boss of the car repair shop monday morning, thank you Mr Herman, monday morning I report to Mr

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Pool, your name is Forde yes sir, he had a old man that was his straw boss, call out to here is your name sacke of yours put him to work, Mr Forde the straw boss give me five pieces of tools to work with, you are responsible for the five pieces of tools, when you finish work this is the place to put them I work out the week and nothing was said, next week I turn to work, there was a machines by the name of Grant who do all the repair work out side the machine shop, he alway come to Mr Pool and said, send me a halper, all right Grant I am going to send you a good helper, Forde go and work with Mr Grant, you know tools yes sir. What is this a sperit level, what is this monkey wrench, this screw-driver, this one stillson wrench this, ball head hammer this one combination square, so you know tools, any time I call you these are the tools to put in the bag, wait I forgot the chisel, all right let us go, we went down to first locks they were a crane break down, he said to the crane man, what is the truble, oh a terrible break down let me see, after about half hour, he said let us go, I have to make about six pieces four inches long, we will have to work all night, when we got back to the shop Mr Perry said how it look Grant very bad try you best and get it ready by morning OK, Forde take my Hotel book and get supper for me and you, I took the book and went to the Hotel and called for one bottle of coffee and too pork chop sandwith, and too cigars, when I return he said that is the boy for me, little after that I saw a man passing, I said to him when you go home tell my wife dont look for me, I have to work through, we work all night till morning we finished ablout five thirty and came back, and by seven oclock, Mr Grant send ~~me~~ to me go back to the car repair shop, later on in the day, he came to Mr Pool, you have a good man, any time I want a man send him, I work beteen the car repair shop and the ~~mk~~ machine shop for about nine month I work for 40 years before I retire, I am only giving you the parts I work in the Construction of the Canal, so you could see that I help in the building of the Panama Canal in conclusion I will leave the words for you to rember GOETHALS GOETHALS your name will always recall the principal contractors they came from the State, Meclentic and Marshall that hang up the gates, it was seventy five feet high, and that you cannot denie with your locks and dam

Yours Truly  
RUFUS EDWARD FORDE  
DR 1336

Fox, Joseph H.; Chilibre Correos, Chilibre, R.P.

By these few lines, you will be enform that I landed hear April 4, 1910. By this, you Gentlemen will know. That those days were hard days. My first job were on the rail Road. Going out in the morning Rain. Work all day in rain untill in the even. At the rate of 10¢ per hour. I work there for about 3 month. You all must think of the heard time of our food. We did not have cook as today sometime we look on the food and leave it the same place on the table cannot be eaten In those days our sleeping were the poorest thing in the world that a human could ever think of But we thank God as a breave soldours, we work for the American goverment to put through the Canal. After leave the rail road, I work for the mantiant division all my days. My eys have seen so much acidient. At my heel. But I am thanking God that he keep me in safiety. I have done some job on the Lock before I leave home, I have said father I leave myself into thine hands I am asking you to take care of me through this sometime when work is not so plenty-full the have laid of some of the men for at time but I am thanking God the last job that I got I work there for 27 years and some month Thank God. I am thanking God for you American people heart. That you all have stretch out your hands of sympity to all the old timer. That each day we can get our daily bread through God and you blessed American people May God bless you good people that your store house will be plentious at all time. God bless you all

I am

yours

JOSEPH H. FOX

García, Francisco; Calle E, Casa #1637, Cuarto 35, bajos mano derecha, Panamá, R.P.

Yo FRANCISCO GARCÍA, nací el 12 de Julio del año 1893, en el callejón del chicheme, conocido hoy como calle 6ª (Barrio San Felipe) a dos cuadras de la antigua Legación Norteamericana.

En mis tiempos se tomaba agua de los pozos de las trincheras Manuel Pérez y el Chorrillo, a cinco centavos (0.05) la lata de cinco galones. A Dios gracias al pueblo estadounidense el gobierno panameño celebró un contrato con la I.C.C. (Compañía Istmeña del Canal), de construir un acueducto en la ciudad de Panamá y otro en Colón.

Fui a trabajar con un estadounidense llamado Charles Rose a Río Grande, donde se empezó el trabajo del acueducto.

Era yo un aguatero. Vivíamos en un campamento de lonas o carpas. El trabajo más grande era en la tarde: ir a buscar un galón de quinina en líquido verde o rojo, un vasito y los tiquetes para la comida. Mi jefe el señor Charles, me ordenó darle un vasito de quinina en líquido a los trabajadores, en caso de no tomarla no recibirían tiquetes para la comida.

Cierto día hubo una huelga. Mi jefe en vista que no habían obreros me dió una recomendación para conseguir un nuevo empleo en Emperador, en un lugar llamado Cunetas. Conseguí el trabajo con una cuadrilla de barreneros. White que así se llamaba el jefe, me ordenó buscar el agua purificada a Emperador. Trabajé allí varias semanas y luego me trasladé a Panamá.

En Panamá conseguí empleo en la construcción del acueducto. El campamento era en el cuartel de Chiriquí, hoy "Palacio Legislativo".

Maás tarde trabajé con una cuadrilla poniendo ladrillos en las calles de la ciudad capital. En la plaza de Arango había una pica piedra, que demolía a éstas y luego servían para mejorar el estado de las calles.

Tiempo después trabajé en el remolcador "Miraflores" donde iba a buscar arena a Punta de Chame. La draga Marmot extraía

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la arena en baldes para traladarla al muelle de la Boca.

Luego fui a trabajar al Cerro Ancón con un señor llamado James que usaba máquinas barrenadoras de tres patas y aire comprimido. El jefe se llamaba Lulan. Cuatro españoles bombeaban las mesillas para trasládarlas de un lado a otro. Después trabajé donde está la plaza Steven, allí está el comisariato Rol de Oro entre la agencia postal y la iglesia Junlan Short allí el comedor. Más tarde fui a trabajar en los barcos de la compañía inglesa limpiando las calderas.

Por el año de 1914 trabajé en la división de faros (Lights House) en una lancha francesa llamada "Balboa". Su capitán se llamaba James Togis. El jefe de la división era el señor Captain Felts. Construimos el faro de Taboguilla, luego nos trasladamos a Cocosolo a trabajar en el servicio de lanchas. En estos intervalos recogimos al Coronel George W. Geothals y al Comandante Cuoney Rodman y estuvimos sondeando el Lago Gatun. Después llegó el nuevo jefe señor Wayscfer.

Cerca del año 1915 hubo un temporal que tumbó un martinete, rompió un rompeolas y con dinamitas tuvimos que volar un barque que el temporal había tirado a la playa.

La división de faros tomó el barco clapet P 7. Después vino otro jefe, el cual se llamaba Sneriker y el capitán era todavía era el señor James Togis.

Cuando los Estados Unidos declaró la guerra a Alemania fuimos a Punta de Toro con tropas americanas del fuerte Fort Sherman a sacar la tripulación de los tres barcos alemanes que se encontraban anclados allí, antes que fueran a dañar los barcos. Después fuimos a poner redes submarinas hechas en el muelle # 11 en Colón (Cistóbal) para ponérselas al rompeolas de Punta Margarita al este de Colón y otras en la entrada de los dos rompeolas.

Luego nos trasladamos a Balboa a poner redes desde la Punta de Palo Seco a la orilla del canal y de allí hasta el otro extremo de la cuarentena. El Jefe de trabajo era el Capitán Lutts. Regresamos al Lago Gatun y se levantaron las dos hojas del puente de Monte Lirio e hicimos canales con dinamitas para trasladar soldados a un lugar llamado Margarita.

Fuimos a Miraflores a coger un lanchón para construir un

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muelle para las tropas. Mas tarde fuimos a colocar un faro en la isla de Boná. Allí murió un hombre. De ese lugar pasamos entonces a San José donde construimos otro faro y de aquí a Punta Mala a reparar el faro. El celador de éste era el señor Donovan. Entre 1919 y 1920 salí hacia New York en el vapor Alianza y de aquí pasamos a Hoboken. De regreso a Panamá me quedé en Colón.

Días después tomé un trabajo en la capitania de Balboa (Boat Landing). Trabajé en la lancha 405 que tenía máquina de gas marca Spelhway. Su capitán era Manuel Romero; trabajé en la lancha Pacífico Santa Rita que tenía dos proas de piloto y también en la lancha del capitán de Puerto Cone.

Recogí un niño ahogado de un que se llamaða Rock, también salvé a un nombre a quien se le había voteado su bote en que viajaba, su companero se ahogó. El hombre que salvé se llamaba Red Man. Informé al muelle # 18, allí se encontraba la ambulancia y el capitán Hawer quien me felicitó.

Durante 1920 a 1955 transporté en lancha a los doctores Light, Fraday, Majilton, Robert, Divis, Yilkapson, etc.

Cuando el capitán Black Born hundió el barco Obarrio cuando tría el tanquero yo estuve de guardia toda la noche. En este accidente perdieron la vida un cocinero y un maquinista de apellido mena.

Para la segunda guerra, cuando el remolcador Chagres choco con las minas afuera de flamenco, trabajé esa noche en la lancha Wahoo de 12 a 8. Encontraron la merte en este accidente los señores Pareja y Rocillo. Un operador llamado Tamgrant y el señor Ríos, trabajaron esa noche en la lancha Albacore.

Ayudé a Mr Queen a instalar las senales que se encuentra a ambos lados y a lo largo del canal.

Las boyas que se encuentran en la estación de Gamboa las pusimos con Mr Felts.

Fuimos en la lancha Balboa y el barco Lavalley.

Conocí como capitanes de puerto en Balboa a: Barn, Scott, Hawer, Rogger, y el actual capitán Albostt.

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Como asistentes a: Judd, Rowe, Elickson.

Trabajando en la lancha Esmeralda de 1 p m a 9 p m un Domingo del año 1950 soplabá el viento suroeste, el mar estaba agitado, fui a llevar el Boording Party (Mr Red Man, Mr Mayo Constons Officer y el Dr Bucher), al vapor Canajagua de la compañía frutera; estando la escalera a babor (izquierda) el barco iba andando a pasar el Canal al tiempo de bajar al guarda y agarrarse al pasa mano, no lo pudo alcanzar y cayó al agua perdiendo la vida. El capitán que llevaba el barco a Cristóbal era el capitán Abott, hoy capitán de puerto.

El jurado de conciencia dictó accidente por el cual fui inocente. Al preguntársele al capitán Abatt como había manejado la lancha, respondió excelente. El día siguiente salió publicado este accidente en el Panama América.

signature typed

Gard, Joseph H.; Rio Abajo Parque Lefebre, 10 St. # 9, Panama,  
R.P.

I were imigrated by the Isthmanian Commision the year 1906, the month of April from Barbados 22d. I were brought to Culebra Rio Grandi I were placed in camp were told in the contract I would received furnish quarters but when I reached it was not so there were some large wooden bunks 3 leaves I took one the night we had no light and for a whole week I had all restless night the old wooden troughs were filled with chinks but second week they were changed I begun to work on Culebra dump I worked 2 weeks the third week I was taken out of camp smitten with malaria was taken to Culebra rest house I spent 12 days in the rest house when I came out I was deaf from the Canine I went to work at Culebra Hotel they was adding on some extension to the kitchen the man in charge of job his name was Alsborn Mr John L Stevens was the Ingineer for the canal at that time I even remember the night when Mr Stevens Daughter marry I played the guitar and sang a song for some of the guest at the sidewalk it came off to Christmas and Mrs Stevens gave us a treat I left that job and got a job painting at Empire Mr Sampsel was chief Foreman and Liscomb was the boss of the gang I remember the month of November, President Rosvelt came here I was painting at the new hotel at Empire the steps outside and the President pass near me dressed in white and wore an Alpine straw hat

I was discharge from the job the month of December, 1906 because I wont feed on the mess, the food was not cooked properly and would not eat it so I was discharge

My next job 1907 I applied for a breaksman job on Ingine No 211 I worked in that job 2 month and quit I went out to work one morning the yard master change me off and told me to go on Locomotive 303 I told him I did not feel like working that morning he sent another breaksman that time New Town Culebra were blown up and ready for excavating 303 Locomotive went to New Town to S. Shovel before I leave the yard I heard the Locomotive whistle blowing I saw the same engine coming the breaksman foot cut off I quit the same time I applied got another job with Labour and Quarters I was sent to Camacha kitchen to work by Mr J. Poole I worked there until the Damm

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was finish I was sent to work as a janiter I work there for Mr Poole until August 7th, 1907 I leave the Isthmus and return to Barbados I expected to return in six weeks but feal sick and could not return untill 1909. I took another contract and return to the Canal Zone I arrive the 22d day of April 1909 and was placed at Culebra again I started to work at Pedromiguil Spanish Mess as a fireman the Steward name was Mr John Harper I work with him a fine man he has I took sick and went to Hospital 15 days when I came out I went to Empire I stood their for some time coming to the close of the year I went to Porto Bello I worked until closing of 1910, I took sick in Portobello sent to Colon Hospital during the time in Hospital a Circular came out after discharge from Hospital must report I stood two days in Colon when I return were discharge

I had forgotton Colonel Gothals 1907 I return to Empire 1911 on my return found things very difficult for a job after knocking around I am a Shoemaker by my tools and start working about the month of July I return to Portobello let me say this the man that risked his life to work in Portobello quarry should been compsated I work as night watchman on Steam Shovel until 1912 I left Colon and came back to Empire went to Pedro Miguil and employ as a Machiner's helper My Foreman name Mr Valdes Mr Bartholmew was Supervisor 1913 was transfered to Miraflores 1st Division it was called and work their untill 1914 February was laid off went to the Dredging department 1st of April and work till November 1915.

JOSEPH H GARD

Garner, John; Estafeta Juan Diaz, Panama, R.P.

I came to the Isthmus from Barbados on S.S. Solent May 1908, service contract #16477 and began work for the Isthmian Canal Commission as laborer "First Class" stationed at Tabernilla. I set to work with a three piece suit, a pick, shovel and a claw bar, servicing R.R. tracks for train taking dirt from the Canal to Dump area, my immediate Foreman was Mr Joe Jalaney and Mr Melvin C. Mack - General Foreman. I worked along with men who had done this work before so I did not take very long to break in. We worked nine hours per day and sometimes a double shift especially when a new dump area was about to be opened and happen to be crossing over the Panama Rail Road main line this work had to be done by night to avoid any delay of the Passenger Train, so we had to hustle. In those days it rained every day and almost all day, never-the-less the work went on and there were no lost time.

In the month of April 1909 I had the first touch of malaria fever and was treated by the Doctor at the Tabernilla Rest House. This place was equipt with beds to take care of about 20 men for a matter of three days and if not better in three days you would be sent to Hospital. I had spent three days at this rest house and although not quite better and did not want to go into Hospital I asked the Doctor for my discharge which he gave me. I believe I had enough Quinine in my body to cure two men. That Quinine had me grogy and I was unable to walk down the stairs alone so I asked a man to help me down the stairs and out into a path which led to the Camp. It was about 9 o'clock in the day and I had to hide around until five o'clock because it was not allowed to be around the Camp during work hours. When I reach the camp it was very near 6 o'clock for the fever had me down and almost out. When the boys at the Camp saw me they came and lifted me up the steps they wanted to give me something to eat but I had no appetite so they drenched me with Bay Rum and had me drink some also. The following day they assisted me to the labor train and put me off where my gang was suppose to work. The Foreman had me sit around until I could join the ranks again. The boys in this gang were very jolly and we got along nicely together. We had talk very much about the "Big Ditch" but none of us has ever seen the Canal up to this time.

Some of us decide to take time out and see what the Canal look like so the following Sunday I left Tabernilla and went to Pedro Miguel where I met with friends who were working in the Canal and they encourage me to stay at that end and get a job in the Canal. On Monday I walked along the Canal to Paraiso and got a job with the Surveys. The Engineer in charge was Mr W. M. Tenny with a staff of 6 State Rate men and 18 Local

Raters the office a wooden structure with a concrete vault for a dry room. The building has been removed but the vault remain up to present time in Paraiso.

I went to work with this outfit as laborer cutting and clearing bush for cross section work placing grade stakes for steam shovel cut running base lines putting up station targets etc. The limit of our run was from Pedro Miguel to Empire Suspension Bridge. We had quite a lot of difficulties with slides along the Canal, the East and West Culebra slides were the most troublesome, a gang had to be stationed there at all time the steam shovels were kept busy day and night. Years rolled on the "D" day was at hand, the Dyke was built across the Canal from Mandinga River to Chagres River. This dyke controlled all waters from Gatun Lake and the Chagres River and protect the Dry Excavation on the south side of the Dyke. By this time Colonel Gaillard had gone back to the States and a new set of Engineers took over. Quite a lot of changes took place the men I worked for was also gone, I was transferred to this new Office. The head of staff this time was W. B. Comber Resident Engineer, James Macfarlane Supervisor and C. L. Vandeburg Engineer in charge of Dredging from Atlantic to Pacific. This new office was also in Paraiso but a different location and much bigger. I had to be broken in to this type of work as I knew nothing about sounding with leadline. In this gang they were 12 States Rate and 70 Local Raters split up into several units, Graded thus Foreman, Carpenter, Leadsman Chainman, Boatman Storeman and Laborer. I got along with these men very well and after a year working I was promoted to Foreman, a Foreman in this outfit was supposed to be able to take notes on Hydrographic and Topographic Surveys also receive and carry out orders correctly. I work along with these men and years rolled on, sometimes in the Cut for a while another time in Balboa or Cristobal. In 1914 Mr Vandeburg went out and in came Mr. John G. Claybourn. I worked along under his supervision just the same, 1937 the entire outfit was transferred to Gamboa while at this office I was promoted to Time Keeper and afterwards Clerk. I had to take care of Files, Maps, Daily report of Dredges, Labor distribution, time cards etc.

By this time Mr. Claybourn was about to be retired from the service, his term in office as Superintendent was 26 years. The Dredging Division is one of the oldest organization of the Canal, created under the Isthmian Canal Commission, this Division has received brilliant citation from Colonel Goethals, Chief of the Isthmian Canal Commission and First Governor of

Garner, J. - p.3

the Panama Canal for its outstanding work covering the slide period and other achievements throughout the years. Mr. P. A. White became Superintendent in 1948. In 1953 6 men came down from the United States to evaluate the Canal from 1904 to 1953. I was assigned to work with these men furnishing data required. The name of the Chairman was Mr True, I dont remember his first name. I worked under the supervision of these men and was retired from service in 1954 a term of 46 years.

My motto was and still is — Perform the fullest measure of work first and expect reward after.

Respectfully

JOHN GARNER

D.R. #6436

George, Augustus; c/o C. Fernie & Co., Box 112, Balboa, C.Z.

My name is Augustus George, arrived on the Isthmus Aug. 3, 1911. Worked for Panama Rail Road at dock #4 as a stevador witch was the old French dock at that time. In those days the vessel came discharged and returned to California because they could go no feather. I remember we could walk from the Port Captian's building at present to Rodman Naval Station through high bush.

In those days we were known has the Isthmain Canal Comition, we worked nine hours a day for ten cents an hour

I Remain Yours  
AUGUSTUS GEORGE

Gittens, Thomas B. ; Gamboa F.O., C.Z. (L.L. #12 Balboa East)  
Obispo

Life on construction days was ruff and tuff only hard work rain or shine we had to go I leave my home Barbados 1905 Agoust 26th I was 19 years old I come on the boat name the aplato Barbadoes is where the labour force came from as counstractee to help build the Panama Canal my first job was on the track ling I work there for some time then for health department then at the ending of 1906 and 1907 I started to work with the railroad with the sivel engineers' work as rodman for \$30.00 a mounth in those days a rodman from the states was paid \$83.33. I did that job up to the time I retire around 1948 in construction we came from Barbadoes by the thousand when we got here we live in camps we slep on chain bunks a pease of canvis tie with rope no matress blanke sheet or piller jhus the cold cain bunk it was ruff and tuff no water we had to get it where ever we could get it we had to do our own washing on Sunday we could only wash once a weak it was ruff and tuff from the start.

Yours Most Respectful  
THOMAS B. GITTENS  
D.E. 3949

Oh there is a lot can be told but let it go at that construction days was ruff and tuff.

Green, Prince George; 7-13 Calle J, Avenida Central, Panama, R.P.

The construction worker gave everything he possessed to the U.S. Government; in regards of work, we worked in rain, Sun, fire, Gun powder, explosions from dynamite; in house and out Side, we had to be hiding for our lives, Yellow fever, Bad water, long hours, in some jobs, no overtime, ten cents an hour, but our intrest was to see the Canal finish cause we came here to build it, just as Governor Geothels Said, he told a foreman in my presance, if he didnt know when he was going to finish the Canal he wouldnt been here. he asked this foreman what time he would finish filling in the Swamp at the Rail Road Station Balboa. The foreman told him he didnt know, he said to the Foreman, its five minutes to eleven oclock. Close it down at eleven, only two persons heard this besides myself, Mr. Comber and Mr. Mc Furlan. Supertendant of the Dredging Division. You see most of us came here with the Same spirit as a Soldier going to war, dont dodge from work or we will never finish it, and it was done not in Six days, but our part was completed, thank God, I live to See the foundation we have laid down. become a living Paradise for those who are enjoying life to its heights on the Canal Zone today, while us who labored as hard as hell to help compete it can only pass through and look at it and Say I have worked here and there in the Construction of the Canal.

Prince George Green  
7-13- Calle J ave Central Republic de Panama  
Born February 28th 1891.

Came to the Panama Canal on the 23thd day of April 1909.  
work as a janitor at Empire, C.Z. until the 1st day of May,  
1910. I went to work for Governor Geothels on his inspection  
motor car, until 1st day of August 1954. on this day I Retired  
with 45 years Service.

Harnais, Bertrand Emilien; 14211 14 St., Room 8, Colon, R.P.

I the under signed is answering you to the matter of request about when I came in the country. In September the 20th 1905 I came here on a contract in a boat by the name of Martinique. The contractors name was Setun that took me on to work on the 22nd of September. I used to work on the track line powder gang in goe hill Culebra Charles Rose, Agan, Me, Joseph, as far as I remember were bosses there and afterward I used to work in a machine shop the boss name was Cob, the last place I worked was Mindi Dairy and I got stuck with a wire and got a thumb blood poison and never got good care taken of it, they had to cut it off on my right hand, I never got paid for it they only gave me sick leave pay that was in 1939 Dr Castry was the doctor Jackson, Hop, Scandal were the bosses You see as I'm french I couldnt read and write english so I was just left up like that. now I'm old get 44.50 for a pension and cant help myself I have to get someone to help me hoping you'll asset me thanking you

Headley, Mrs. Albertha; House 2628, 9 Street, Rio Abajo,  
Panama, R.P.

I come to the Isthmus under Contract he arrived here in 1905, returned back to his native soil in 1908 - married Mr. F. A. Headley, 1908 - December the same year he returned back to Panama on Jan 12 - 1909 then his wife arrived here in the Isthmus of Panama, Sept - 13 - 1910 and find him employed by the Quartermaster in Empire and he worked there until Dec 1912, He left there and was reemployed by Mac Clinted Marshall 1913 he left and when to the baggage station at Pedro Miguel a few months also leave this job here in 1913 got a next employment in Balboa by Engineer servay he also work until job terminated, then he went to work at the train station at Balboa after 1913 to 1914.

Here are some of my experience that I saw here, places & scenes are not there now but most of Panama when I come here was mostly swamp & cow pasture where \_\_\_\_\_ Balboa, is was nothing to talk about but I have lived to see it a beautiful sight now cause we have cured mostly of the diaseses or infection in Panama then we saw snakes of all description until they have get rid of most of them we have a little animal here which there called mongosse. I saw one here in old Paraiso because it killed a snake then I can telled you something that was most I see lifes lost day by day in the Canal Construction. The time war broke out - then the two times in my life as young man, is when the water enter through the Canal & Locks also the boats that pass through there, then we had a more joful time when the worl war was over a Greatest Day. In entire life to see people \_\_\_\_\_ the Indian, in Panama had such glorious time that I have never see before,

Thank very much  
MRS. ALBERTHA HEADLEY

Hermon, Peter; Colon Post Office, Colon, R.P.

This is to certify that I have work for the Panama Canal from 1905 the 17th of April untill 1915 at your desere. Arrived from Barbadoes contract. Work for the survy department with Mr. Tatan and Mr. Nornance living in camps and tents in difficult paths thru rains and suns. A lots of fever in those days I have to take medicine on the job. The Doctor's name was Mr. Goram his helper's was Mike. Work on the rail road with Mr. Conole General foreman Sub forman Skipper. Also Lascasadas cut as pump man giving water to steam shovels. Mr. Cant foreman Supt. Mr. Chanler Govener Gothel's head quarters were in Culebra. His coach man's name was Williams. My memory can't aford me thru old age to give more details.

While remain  
PETER HERMON  
D.R. 4437

Hibbert, Isaiah H. ; Fairfield Ave., Irwin P.O., St. James,  
Jamaica.

I have seen your advertisement of your competition and would like to be considered as an entrant.

I arrived in Panama in 1911 and got a job in the powder-gang at Colobra Cut. My second job was at the stem shovel moving section in the same cut. My third job was to work on the hydraulic pump at Gold Hill.

When the Dyke was blown up in 1913 the 11th of November, the water came in and I worked on the mud-scow in the nights in the same Colobra Cut. My fifth job was at Miraflores cutting steel and iron to lay on the locks.

When the canal was constructed it was 75 feet deep. I knew only of two locks one at Gatunc and the other at Miraflores. The locks were constructed with cement steel and sheet iron. The sides and bottom were constructed of concrete. There is "centre wall" in the centre of the Canal.

There was a remer at the lock a Miraflores which broke down one day and killed about 30 men.

I am,  
Your Respectfully  
I. H. HIBBERT

Written on the 21st July by Isaac James as stated by Mr.  
Isaiah Hibbert

Hodges, George; 5th Cuba Ave. St., Hse 24-17, Guachapali,  
Panama, R.F.

My arrival on the Isthmus May 21st, 1906; landed in Colon from on board the steam ship Tagus. Then I were transferred to the Panama Rail Road train; when saying train, I don't mean passenger train; it was box car train, myself and many many more. While coming up from Colon, one box car was cut off to each section until we got to Pedro Miguel that night. Then on that same night, we were taken to Cocoracha Section; from there, we were also taken to the Mess Hall; where we were well treated that night. From thence we were again taken to the Government Camp to sleep. We were told by the boss in charge who was an American man to get ready to report to work by 6 o'clock the following morning. After we were reported on that morning, he said to us, now boys, each one of you get hold of a pick and shovel and follow me. We did obey his orders; and he then took us up to Paraiso yard where the water company was digging a ditch to put down a big water pipe. As far as I can remember, that ditch was about 5 feet deep, just about exactly where the Club House and Commissary in Paraiso right now in the mid road. Around that very spot where that Commy & Club House is built now, there was a coal bunker where the night huslers used to coal up engines at nights. Should there be any doubts on that, you can please refer to records in Balboa Heights. The name of the Superintendent was Mr. Walker so far as I can remember. The general foreman of that Divission was one Mr. Taylor, the Chief Time-keeper name was Mr. Winter, who then gave to us ICC check to work with. At the very spot where the High School built right now, there was a small lake of water where they usually used to dump garbage came from the section. Very few people of to-day knows that. I worked about six (6) months with that divission as far as my memory served me. I left there and went and got a job in a Hotel in that same Section (Paraiso). The Hotel Manager name was Mr. Seigal, whom I worked for about eight (8) months.

After working eight months at the Hotel, I went and got a job in another Hotel in Empire. This particular Hotel was one of the Old Frenchmen's Building of which was occupied temporary. It was around October 1907. During that same year December, we were transferred over in ~~an~~ a new Hotel which was built at or near the Panama Rail Road Station in Empire. The Manager's name was Mr. Gondolfo. I worked there about 10 months;

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then I left there on account of payment was too small; for in those days, they were only paying \$15 a month.

After I had left the Hotel, I again picked up a job at Rio Grande Car Repairing Gang. The Foreman's name was Mr. Rosegrant, whom I've worked for over an year.

From there, I got a job in Colebra Cut, in the year 1909. From here I can give you some brief experience about Colebra Cut, during those days. The Foreman, whom I got the job, his name was Jack Adams. I was employed there as a powder man. I worked there from 1909 to 1914. I can remember in the year 1913, of which I cannot recall the date, but it was on a Saturday, we were notified by the boss from the Friday afternoon, to report to work Saturday morning early, because we were going to have an important task to be carried out that day. In those days there were seven (7) powder gang working from Paraiso, Colebra Cut down to Empire Cut. The following names were the Foremen's to each gang. 1st, Jack Adams, 2nd. Jeffry, 3rd. Moony, 4th. Cushing, (two brothers). Well, these five powder men got together to make a shot that Saturday. On that day we all met together, both bosses and workmen. After we had all gathered together Mr. Adams, who was my boss called to me, Hodges come here; he ask me as you all the time been going to the powder house, please let me know what kind of powder do you have up there; I intern said to him that I have key-stone, du-pont and Trojan. He again ask me Hodges, what kind of powder do you think best to used to shoot those holds to-day? I immediately told him to take my advise and use the Trojan powder.

He said to me, why sould you choose Trojan powder, and leave out key-stone & du-pont the best? I told him that I know that they are the best, but I prefer Trojan powder, because you have a better chance with Trojan than the other two powders. In case of danger, Trojan powder will give you a sign. He ask me, what do you mean by a sign? I told him that the sign is that when the Trojan powder gets into the hole, that it boils like a pot because you can naturally hear it. But not key stone and du-pont. When ever they get hot, they fired off right away. Then, one of the boss who name was Jeffry, said to him, he's right; Trojan powder is the best one to use today to do that job. And they all had came to an agreement, to use Trojan powder. Then, Jack took out his pocket book and wrote a note to the watchman whose name was Brown; the note said, please to deliver to these men 175 boxes of dynamite. Each box contains 50 lbs. and it

carries 5 packages for which each pack carries 20 sticks. When the powder was delivered on the spot, he told me personally; see to it that they are protected and cover over from the engine's sparkles. And so I did. Then at the same time Mr. Cushing said, "Well boys, this shot is to be made day, don't play around; for if it even take us up to midnight tonight, it has to be done." Now the loading started; now take a note of what I am saying now; some of the holes were 30 ft. vertical, and some were less. The toe holes, what they have called toe holes, some were 10 ft. to 12 ft. deep. When we were about midway in the shot, one of the Cushing called to a man by the name John Sandyford, and told him to take some men with him and go back and start to load the toe holes. About 5 minutes after they had started loading those holes, I heard Sandyford shouted out, "look out fellows!" And when we did look, we saw the holes started to discharge one by one without any electrical wire attached to them. Then it was that time we had realized what was going to happen. And what did really happen, the bosses and all the men had to run to save their lives. So, I was the man who advise the boss to use that Trojan powder, and if they did not heed my advise, I would not be alive today to tell the story what had ~~happened~~ happened that day. By saving 5 powder gang, 3 track line gang lives, praise ~~xxxxx~~ be to the Almighty God, not one man never get hurt nor even a scratch from that shot. And through my good advise, I was honored by both white and black in the gang. And the following payday, I gotted a collection from mostly all the co-workers and the 5 white men.

After everything were over, the Monday morning when we went to work, I gotted a big shake hand from almost every man in the gang by saving their lives after God.

Mr. Joseph Little was the Superintendent, and one hand Miller was the supervisor. Mr. Galigo was the General Foreman for the Steam Shovel. Mr. C'Neil was the General Foreman for the Track Line. Mr. Hill was the General Foreman for the Tripod Drilling gang. Mr. Woodman was the General Foreman for the Star Drill. If there should be any question to be ask, you can please let me know.

Again I have seen by my own eyes there were some men were drilling some holes with the Tripod Drill one afternoon, of which I cannot remember the date; it was about 10 to 15 minutes after 5, of which in those days we use to work until 5 o'clock; they were working over-time that evening. On my

way up the track, about 50 ft. from them, I witnessed a stone about the size of a flour barrell pitched out the cliff, as if it had been thrown by some one, and drop on a colored man's back, while he was cranking a Tripad Drill Machine; and killed him dead dead on the spot.

A next accident that I have witnessed again, it was one evening about 5:10 P.M.; we had already loaded some holes to make a shot; but as a rule, the shot could not be fired, until after 5 when everybody are cleared away from that area. So whenever time he is going to make a shot at that hour, he generally sommed the Trackline gang to clear the track, and also be on the laert for whenever the shot is fired. Because should in case the shot affect the Trackline, they can repair it immediately after the shot; for the Train to pass the following day. On that very same evening, there was an engine coming up on the same track; the number of the engine was 288. I saw one of the men from the Trackline gang was standing in the center of the track; and all the call his own Countrymen called to him to get off the track; but he kept on looking at the coming engine coming towards him. If that engineer did not check up on his speed he was coming, that man would of been a dead dead man in pieces on the spot. The engine came up on him and pushed him some 15 to 20 feet in the track from where he was standing; but he was still alive, with mostly all his skin was striped off like a piece of ham bone. All I could of heard him said, "Mi Madre, Mi Madre!" which means, "My Mother, My Mother!" The engine immediately took him to ~~xxx~~ Ancon Hospital, as it was called during those days. That gang was only all Spain Spaniard working together. After he was taken to the Hospital, I did not get know report on his recovery.

Again, here is another accident happened while I was working in Rio Grande; there was an engine #261 was hauling crush stones to Colebra and other Sections. While going one evening about after 5 o'clock, the train cut apart; one half in front with the engine, and the other half coming behind near by; there was a Montserratian man tried to hop on the first half of that train; he then missed his step and fell down right at the wheel of the second train which was coming behind, and cut his body right in two halves. One half went one side of the track and the other went the other side, as if he had been chopped with a machette. He wasn't dead at the same time, because he was gasping for breath. So from these experiences, of which I had witness with my own eyes, I can recall on lots of details of what had happened during the digging of the Panama Canal.

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As I have already stated, these happenings should be recorded in Balboa Heights. The only thing that bother me, the dates I really cannot remember. Should there be any slight doubt on these, please refer to records; for I am certainly sure that they are recorded. Maybe, not as I explain, but they are there along with many many more.

These happenings are just part of all what I have seen during those days. There are lots more I can say, but it will take me quite a time.

So as I am a Retired Old Timer, I am giving thanks to the United States of America, and may God bless them all.

GEORGE HODGES  
Old Timer

Holder, Everton M.; c/o Mrs. Evelyn Howell, 672, Rainbow  
City, C.Z.

I came to the Isthmus of Panama in 1905. My first employment in the early construction days was at Corozal as a painter under Supervisor, Mr. Stewart. Like many other employees, I suffered much with malaria fever because of the water and swampy conditions which existed then. We, the employees, often had to drink water running from the river flowing through Corozal. Sometimes railroad engines would supply us on evenings. Although I had to cook and wash as best I could, I am truly grateful for the help of all the great Americans and others I met during my struggle with the difficulties and hardships that both working conditions and the lack of sanitation presented. I have much to praise God for I was able to retire with 49 years of good conduct and meritorious service with the Panama Canal.

Balboa Heights can furnish a detailed record of the many duties which I performed during that time of extremely hard and hazardous labor. However, I would like to give a brief history of my services in the building and maintenance of the Panama Canal. Besides working at Corozal, I painted quarters and employees barracks at Paraiso. Under Quartermaster King, I worked as a foreman painter at Culebra. At Pedro Miguel I was in charge of supplying materials to men working at distant stations; and during many engagements served as a volunteer fireman. World War II found me working as a foreman painter with the Commissary Division. Being then a resident of Rainbow City, then named Silver City, I served in the Civilian Defense as Chief Area Warden, a service for which I am the happy holder of a certificate and ribbon of merit, as well as the title of lieutenant.

To mention some of the officials for whom I have painted quarters and furnitures, etc., I venture the following list. Col. Gothals, Adm. Foussée, Col. Gillard, Col. Hodges, various Quartermasters, J. B. Fields of the Building Division, etc.

It was a common thing to have to carry a 112-lb container of white lead paint on my shoulder all the way through Culebra Cut from Silver Hill to Gold Hill to do my work as transportation was not up to date. I had to pass many steam shovels

Holder, E. M. - p.2

which digging the channel and had to duck so as to get away from dynamite blasting in the great Culebra Cut. In those days I witnessed men who were damaged by train accidents and many who were blasted when lighting dynamite fuses or by the explosions of the dynamite itself.

...I have ventured to give you this rhyme of the great water as it is today.

MY SONG

The Isthmus of Panama is a narrow neck of land;  
It joins the North and South as if they were one.  
The North Americans with their sharp-edged tools,  
Cut the neck to make a man-made lake with three brimming pools.

Panama the crossroad of the world  
Let all the nations sing  
Panama the crossroad of the world  
It is the nations' hymn.

The North Americans with their engineering skill  
Sent the sea waters up and down hill,  
From the Atlantic to Pacific Side  
Where the Caribbean washes with flooding tide.

Panama the crossroad of the world  
Let all the nations sing  
Panama the crossroad of the world  
Carries a mighty ring.

The locks are the controlling of the great waterway.  
They do the job by night as well as by day.  
They raise the water up to a level bed;  
They keep it there just like a dead.

Panama the crossroad of the world  
Let all the nations sing  
Panama the crossroad of the world  
Let the harmony swing.

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The depth of the chamber is not very deep  
It is not less than seventy-five feet  
The width across is one hundred and ten  
Not quite as wide as a circus tent.

Panama the crossroad of the world  
Let all the nations sing  
Panama the crossroad of the world  
Land where the Balboa's king.

With some giant machinery that is called the mule  
They convey the ships in and out the locks  
With lines attached from ship to mule  
They tow the ships out the gigantic pool.

Panama the crossroad of the world  
Let all the nations sing  
Panama the crossroad of the world  
The old and new uniting.

Now that the ships are out of the locks,  
The funnel of world commerce  
They propell their way to distant docks,  
Cargo and human load to disperse.

Panama the crossroad of the world  
Let all the nations sing  
Panama the crossroad of the world  
It's a perpetual thing.

Amen.

Respectfully yours,  
EVERTON M. HOLDER

D. R. No. 6284  
Date of birth: Nov. 12, 1887

Holligan, John A.; 13 St., A. G. Building 13-185, Room 18,  
Colon, R.P.

I John A Holligan D.F. 3971 leave the Island of Barbados in the year 1906 the month of June landed on the Isthmus of Panama the 3rd day of July 1906 Was employed on the 6th of July of said year at the Cristobal Corral in the days of I.C.C. as a Steamster at the rate of \$30.00 per month got a raise at a later date to \$40.00 My first boss was by the name of Mr. Powers I worked at the Corral from 1906 until 1920 In the year 1906 1907 - 1908 they had no sanitation Malaria fever was killing out the people the deads were so many we the Steamsters had to go to the hospital around the beach for the deads in wagon to place them in box cars around by Christ Church they had track line lade there to Mt Hope Cemetery. The cost of living at that time was so low any one could live on what you work for the things in the commissary was at a low price for instant Rice 4 lbs for 12¢ Flour the same a bread 4¢ 1 tin milk 5¢ a blue shirt for working 40¢ at that rate a \$2.50 book you could almost buy everthing you needed. Rent in the goverment Quarters free until when we started to pay I paid as much as \$4.35 I got married in the year 1908 the 14th day of July to my present wife was the father of five children 2 died leaving 3 who were girls. In the year 1920 Feb month I lost that job a strike came up I was then hired at the electrical division 1st day of March of said year as a helper under the supervision of Mr Jack Martin I worked with many others but my last boss was Mr Meyor. I got retired in May 1949 on account of my sight I have never been sick in all those years of Service not until my sight had failed me now I have lost both legs but thank God I am still feeling good in my body. During my years of Service I got along with every one I came in contact with.

Hoping this will meet your approval

I remain  
Daughter Ethel H. Worrell  
Attorney in fact for John A Holligan

Hughes, Joseph Theophilus ; Estafeta Farque Lefevre; Panama,  
R.P.

I landed on the Isthmus the 28 of May 1906.

My experiences are the following. The first place i work was in Lascascadas as carpenter helper with Mr. Vernon an American, at that time the coal chute was in building in Lascascadas. These coal chute was build with heavy steel and at that time we had to use our hand to lift those steel, to get them in their right places and by lifting those heavy steel is almost got my finger and toes cut off, that was my first experiences in the Canal work. A little before the coal chute was through i leave Mr. Vernon and went to work in the Sanitary Department with Mr. Lebert a Jamaican foreman in Matachin, which is another experiense i gain i was almost bitten by a great serpent. At that time many was kill by mosquitos. After that i leave the Sanitary Department and went to work in the Drilling Department my foreman was Mr. Barnes in Basobispo. During that time they was loading powder for the purpose of the Canal work; just two days before the explosion in Basobispo i leave the powder Department that was another thrilling experience. After the powder Department i went and work again for the coal chute my foreman was Mr. Lowe an American under the supervision of Yardmaster Mr. Bugard an American at that time i was a coal trimer. I could give many more experienses from 1906 until when water went in the Canal but i must stop at that.

Many time i meet death at the door, but thank God i am alive to see the great improvement the Canal had made and the wouderful fame it has around the world.

One of the builder of the Canal  
JOSEPH T. HUGHES

Hunt, Clifford; Labor Office (?), Cristobal, C.Z.

I Clifford Hunt contracted here 1906 and drop at Gorgona Section. I came by the Royal Mail Steam packet by the name Solent. They took us to a camp in the bottom of Gorgona. I work in the shop the second week the Red Mud took of my boot sole I wonder what was the meaning of that; I had no money I had to tie my foot with canvas Malaria hold me and my bowels got big I went in the rest house in Gorgona fever hold me so fast cause me to leave two weeks pay and I did not no how I could get it and I never worry up to now. I work in Matachin with typhoid drills with steam we had no air, I escape death from the explosion in the Canal I work six months in water night and day. I never had a minute dry clothes water up to my knees, I work lifting steam shovel section I work with every thing that come to put thru the Canal Men in my gang tell the Boss I am going out to ease my bowels and they die in the bush and nobody look for you I cry sometimes to see how I work to put this Canal through up to know they dont pay us no mine today men are walking in and have everything sweet I am one up to the time they retire me in 1950 and the little small pension we are dying for Starvation. but I ask God to open you all hearts and have mercy on us through Starvation cause plenty of us to die the cost of living nobody say any thing about us every year you hear little talk and that all. But I will say I wish Uncle all prosperity in life hoping he may reign for ever

CLIFFORD HUNT

Hussey, Brandt ; c/o Mrs. Louise Benjamin, caretaker, Mt.  
Charles Border F.C., St. Andrew, Jamaica.

Some days ago I were looking over a newspaper and I came across your advertisement stating that you would like to find some West Indian that work in the Panama Canal prior to 1915 to give some experience about the digging of the Canal and as I am one of the man that work their I would like to give some of my experience of what I see and what I know In the year 1909 I leave Jamaica for Colon I land in Colon the 10th of May same year I went in the Zone a couple of days after and I got a job in Cristobal hotel as a cook helper from their I begin to experience some of the work that were going on in the Canal first thing I admire most how Cristobal were kept clane that were a plaisure After some time drudge 86 came down from the USA and went to Fox River I got a job on her and on that drudge I spent the most of my time That drudge were a sand piper her pipe line were glaid on pantons across the sea and are conected by ruber band and when that drudge lower her cutter she dig 45 feet deep and suck 5 feet - total 50 feet - and any time she leave that spot she leave 50 feet of water and she will trow sand mud and rocks true her pipe line to any where they want it to go to find out how she work she has got two large woden pole and any time she stop work they low the two poles but when they start work they lift one and then the operato swing her too and frow and then she work day and-night - if she should come across rocks that she cannot cut they move her away to another spot then the star drill come in then they drill the rocks and load them with danamite and every Saturday after noon thay blass those rocks Then they bring in the dipper drudge and she with her shuvle scrape out all those rock and trow them into barge then the big boat come and take the barge and carrie it out to torra point and dump it their

I will say some thing about toara point and Magareta point those are two trusle that is stretching out in the sea to form the brake water the toara point trusle is 7 miles long and Magareta trusle is 3 miles long with those two trusle only the chanel is left open that shows if the Atlantic should raise when the force of that water meet against those trusle it rebound and would not able to enter the Canal with her force if one was to be going up to Colon and see those trusle you would not beleave it is dump land.

I would like to say some thing about Gatune for it is between Gatune and Cristobal I spend the most of my days. I were in Catunc when they dig down a hill and bring it to level. Then they start doing the excecavating work to make the locks.

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After they come plect that then comes the McKlentic Marshal to hang the gates Then that is wher I see wonders first they put up a concreet mixer then cement sand and gravle and water all gage and below the mixer their is a lot of pan car running on electric lines they goes under the shute and get their load and then they go to the place they want the concreet They dump it out and away they go day and night. I have seen some of the Canal where the French man were diging in the day of the Delessep I goes to the dry dock at Mt. Hope and see where they repair ships I go to the Masheen Shop at Mt. Hope and several other part of the Canal Many of my country men lost their life in the Canal Colon were a dirty place full of mud dirty water masquita But the American to 86 drudge and dump up the whole place I was their when the big fire were in Colon so I can say the American Government do lots of good for Colon and Panama Their were a place where some people was living call Guarva rig when any one have to go their you have to walk on board walk the American dump up that place and now I here it is call the Silver City God Bless the American Government for they have save a lot of life from dirt and filt I have stay their long enough to see the first ship go true the Canal and after that I leave the ismust and I never go back I went to many other country I work in Cuba in the American naval station in Guantanamo I have lots of expriance about that naval station but as you are not interested in the naval station I wont worry about it but I were in the naval station before I go to Colon

I wish you will accept this and escuse writing for I am a old man now today is my birth day I am 82 years of age I write this my self I beg no one to write for me

Now I must close at this and my name is Brandt Hussey born in Jamaica in the year 1881.

James, Frederick ; All Saints Village, Antigua, B.W.I/

I went to the Isthmus of Panama in 1907. I left December 31st 1917. I work from Gatun to Balboa. I work with a surveyor putting down stakes for the steam shovel to dig the earth throwing the mould each side of the Canal.

From the time I went there, I work with the surveyor only, putting down stakes daily for the steam shovel to dig.

We have got a lock and dam in Gatun and a lock and dam in Miraflores.

I work with the following Gentlemen as listed below:

- (1) Mr. Cotton - assistant Engineer.
- (2) Mr. James - assistant Engineer.
- (3) Mr. Baldwin - Junior Engineer.
- (4) Mr. Woodson - Transit man.
- (5) Mr. Merrick - Transit man.
- (6) Mr. Preechit - Transit man.

There were many class of workers; not only were those who lay the stakes; but there were also those who operated the steam shovel.

There were also baboons into which the mould was placed, and trains used to take the mould and dump it at a far away place.

There were over 46,000 workers. My personal No. on the brass was 46,843.

Working hours in the morning was 7 a.m., though we left our homes on the 6 o'clock train to reach for the appointed time.

We got meals at the Commissary, where eatables were sold.

It was the United States that proposed to take over the construction of the Panama Canal. Almost immediately the people of Panama who were anxious to have the Canal made, seceded from Colombia who refused to ratify the suggested arrangements, and formed themselves into a Republic.

The Panama Canal Zone is 10 miles wide. It is a strip of land perpetually leased. In return the United States paid the new Republic the sum of \$10,000,000 and agreed to pay an

James, F. - p.2

annual rent of a quarter of million dollars, beginning after nine years.

The great difficulty in the way of the construction of the Canal was disease.

It was discovered that the mosquitoes was the carrier of the disease - yellow fever, and persistent war was waged against it.

The length of the Canal from shore to shore is  $35\frac{1}{2}$  miles, and from deep water to deep water is almost 44 miles.

I sincerely hope, I have completely satisfied you, and have sent the information that is required as advertised by Ruth C. Stuhl in one of our newspaper - where she quoted that 1st, 2nd and 3rd. Prizes \$50 (U.S.)

First prize; \$30 - U.S. - 2nd Prize and \$20 U.S. dollars. 3rd. prize.

Hoping that I'll be one of the fortunate ones being one of the personal workers.

I say "Thank you" in advance.

I am,  
Yours faithfully,  
FREDERICK JAMES

P.S. Better known in Antigua as James Frederick.

Joseph, Jacob; #942, Agua Bendita, Chilibre, R.P.

I arrived from Antigua in 1909 and started to work in the same year for the canal construction on the track-line, tampering rails, carrying rails and repairing ties; turning switch; using star and typer drill; running electric wire for explosion; using steam shovel; digging holes about 75 to 90 feet for erection of tower plus concreting basement and carrying powder for explosion into cut.

Right after I started to work on Pedro Miguel and Miraflores locks using machine to reem out holes.

Then I started to work for the Electrical Division from 1913 to 1957 in the capacity of helper and chauffeur at Pedro Miguel, then at Paraiso.

The living conditions existed of camps while employed in the canal construction and 6 to 8 men were living in one little room. Sleeping accomodations were not available, so we had to sleep on the floor.

While employed also for the construction, we were surrounded by lots of water, mud and grease, and safety was very much inadequate. No safety goggles or gloves were in use.

While employed by the Electrical Division, I was acquainted with Mr Fare, who was then the Electrical Engineer. I was also acquainted with Messers Yokum, McGuire, Wilson, Sweeney and Bright, who resides at Gamboa at present.

I was and am acquainted with...

Respectfully yours,  
JACOB JOSEPH

Kavanagh, Lancelot A.; River View, Flowden P.O., South  
Manchester, Jamaica.

Seeing your adv in the daily Gleaner of 11 June 1963 I  
hereby give you some of my experiences on the Ismus.

Arriving in Colon on the S.S. Viscania of the  
steamship Coy in 1905 at the time when the Libirals and Con-  
servites were fighting Saw a train came in from Panama with  
Box Cars marked Coffee when sudenly in Colon the Cars was opened  
up out came solders shooting all over the town after many  
years many of the shot holes could be seen in the rail way peer  
Zinc where the shots marked it was then that the Americans  
took over

I got a job as cook at Washington Hotel then Americans  
started up a hospital on the beach I took a job there as  
Steward had to go in the market early mornings to buy meat &  
vegetables that was the Colon market Manager of the hospital  
was a Gentleman named Dr Kerr but after the hospital began to  
Improve more were coming in I lost the job to a white man  
at that time one Mr. Conolly was Engineer on the Panama Rail  
Road tall big man I taught him to be scotuh always in his  
khaki suit and out on the Line in came Luist. Fedrick Mears  
Engineer for the Ismatation Canal Commission I got a job as  
forman and was the first to put up a flag on Gatun hill and  
laid out tent there for the men who wer now coming in from  
America but the fever was so bad many came and went back on the  
next boat colored & white were dying fast hundreds were  
burried at Monkey Hill now called Mount Hope

I will here give an honest joke that happened at Gatun  
Hill

Some of the formen brought their Mothers in Law with them  
and on sundays they would clear the tables from the dining tent  
and one of the formen would preach to the rest This foreman  
minister gave out it must have been a terrible day when Johna  
sallowed the whale one of the old ladies in a corner said  
slowly it was a mistake not Johna sollowed the whale it was  
the whale who sollowed Johna Said the foreman parson I dont  
care a God dam but I know some dea sollowing was being carried  
on Took up the bible he had and walked out the camp

I next went to Bohio and worked there as chief cook and  
manage for the mess camp There was a Mr Dorothy Cawsy Chamberlin  
and a mr Jack C Homer a grand engineer but a great drunk he  
would be drunk for 3 days for the week but in two days he did  
more work than the rest did for the week When the water started  
to back up in Bohio the camp was transfered to the Governors

house on the Hill for a few months I then went with the engineers to survey the rail line from Gatun to Gorgona. They built up a town en route called Frolies. The men there lived in box cars. White & coloured workers. They had a Commissary ran by a old French man. The forman there was Ran Elder a very hard working man.

It was at this station that an Engineer slipped at a switch broke his leg and when taken to the Hospital found she was a woman working among the men all the time. Leaving there I went to work as Mess Manager & cook at Miraflores on the hill. I had some friends working at Tivoli Hotel as waiter. They told me how heavy the tips were. I left and went got a job and had two tables out at 5 a.m. got my meals and start serving 5:30 to 7:30 or 8 a.m. off at 9 back at 11:15 my lunch start 12 till 2:30 back at 4:30 till 7:30 p.m. I had to change my suit three times for the days as was wet through from the running up and made the tips but within two months had to leave it my legs started to tremble.

Then I went to Gatun where they were building the lock and the hourly pay was good. Got a job using a air Hammer on the out side. 4 of us to a board with a hook on each end of the board to a chain running down their being layers of these down the side with 4 men each. The air machine weighed about 28 lbs. Some fool on top of my Board moved over from his end to get a cigarett by doing this the board toppled out the hook and sent about five boards with men & machine down. 4 died instantly about 10 others got broken limbs. Luckily for me I never got a scratch but they put me in an electric and shook us up. The doctor told me I would eventually loose all my teeth which did happen a few years later. Got so frightened never went back for the 4 days pay I had there.

About this time they started a railway down at David pedrogal about three days sail from Panama. I went out there to work with an engineer L C Hammond was ~~xxxxx~~ out there for six months when I got back to Panama my foot on the ground my hair like a woman had to cover up my skin to get into a walkerover store where in which had a hair cut, wash up, breakfast, They having taken measurement for my suit they weighed my old rags paid me for them by the weigh all this after we had lost every thing in the David jungle by the river over running its banks in the night. Instruments, cots tents every thing. I now wonder if this road was ever built?

Having had enough I left in 1912 came to Jamaica and started business on my own made my self a merchant and property owner married has four children all married has

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grand children and now an old retired man "oh" many a day I  
sit and remember all the bad and good times I had over on the  
Isthmus I lost my wife 11 years ago

Yours truly  
LANCELOT A. KAVANAGH

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or  
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mine. I took possession, slept there-in and felt at home. I left next morning in interest of securing employment, again I was fortunate, I approached one Mr. Christian an American, Foreman, placed my request and was employed the same day in the Labor and Quarters department as a Utility-man at 10¢ per hour, February 23, 1906.

In the early construction days, conditions were deplorable. Sanitation very bad, snakes, malaria fever, yellow fever and other insect pest were a grave menace to the life and health of all employees regardless of color. Another uncomfortable thing was that of a six months yearly rain-fall. Suitable drinking water was a thing of the past. Had fever and diarrhea for seven days. There were two sources of water which was harnessed and purified for drinking purposes and otherwise. One at the Atlantic end, and the other at the Pacific. Mt. Hope was at the Atlantic end, and Miraflores at the Pacific. Miraflores water was pumped from the Chagres River at Gamboa through underground main pipe a distance of approximately six miles and stored in several chambers, chemically treated for drinking. I had to do my own cooking, my clothes washing I had to do that on Sundays where river streams could be found, forced dry, pressing by sleeping on them for Monday morning preparation.

From the day I got on board the ship, a deck passenger, there was absolutely no way of me changing what I had been wearing until the night of February 22.

The Canal Zone was purely under military rules and regulations. There were no Community nor recreation centers.

Between the years 1906 and 1908 from what I had seen daily, I manifest my doubt as to whether the death toll on the Canal Zone had, and could be correctly estimated. As for me personally I escaped death three times, by train, hand-car and by drowing in the Chagres trying to restore telephone service across the river with the use of a canoe which could not ford the river and drifted to an embankment when I had to jump for safety.

The heaviest one-time death-toll was between 1910 and 1912, this occurred between Obispo and Empire. It was a great dynamite explosion which shook the whole place, taking everything in its wake. Deaths by accident, mangled bodies, accidental-amputation of limbs, feet and hands by trains.

Nationals of every tribe, race and color from all parts of the world contributed to the building of the great water-way.

In early days the canal was classified under the heading of Isthmian Canal Commission. Labor had built the greatest engineering feature in the world and is still operating it.

The greatest technical advise , the greatest labor brain are the Americans with their money whom I personally considered.

There was a great Governor preceeded my term of employment, his name was Thatcher, a high-way is built in commeration of his honor. Chief Engineer J. E. Stevens succeeded him, I worked under his administration.

About the later part of 1906 and early 1907 a great man of renown, calm, principled, dignified, high rank and quality in the person of Col. G. W. Goethals, was sent from America to undertake the great task of constructing the great water-way. He came first as Col. then General and after Governor. His first residence was in Culebra and finally ~~xxxx~~ removed to Balboa Heights.

Prior to Governor Goethals arrival and assumption and the formation of his cabinet there was an executive adviser embude with outstanding ability in person Mr. C. A. McIlvaine, legal adviser to all governors.

Governor Goethals first designate his cabinet on taking charge. He divided the canal strip into three divisions, Atlantic, Central and Pacific. Col. Sibert was then appointed to the Atlantic Division, Col. Gaillard to the Central and Col. Williamson to the Pacific. Notable among the best brains were Col. Hodges and Col. Gorgas. Col. Hodges was Governor Goethals Aid-e-camp and Col Gorgas the health department, creditably he performed his work, hence the great Gorgas Hospital. Preliminary plans gets under-way, heavy locomotives, steam shovels, dump trains, drilling machines and other minor equipments. There were many doubts manifested as to the reality of the completion. Some of the railway stations mentioned had fallen in the canal prism and are under water, some no excavation work was carried out, the area was bare low-land and need no excavation. The mosttroublesome part during construction was the Culebra Cut, through it heights on both sides, there was always a continued sliding and more-so toward the east. Dredging was necessary during dry season and worst in the wet, land slides blocking the channel and necessitate dredging to clear the silt which blocked the water-way.

As work on the canal progressed and proved a reality provisions were made for the inhabitants who were residing on the west side to cross by the construction of a pedestrian crossing at Empire. There was also a swinging bridge at Paraiso, this bridge was later removed to the north end of the Pedro Miguel Locks.

A relocated railway line was constructed and diversion of train followed from Gatun to Gamboa. A Gamboa a Dike was built as a blockade against the rising of water from the

nothern end, and prevent or visa vera from the other or southern end, and permit train service crossing over.

At this junction the passenger trains had was to do some reversing until the Dike was removed. In or during the month of October 1913, this Dike was blown up by President Woodrow Wilson in America, there was a submarine cable laid down between Panama and America, two wires were taken from that cable by a cable-splicer of whom I was a helper Mr. John Strauss, the ends cut were on the west side of the Dike the regular method of blasting was carried out after I was told that the ends of the two wires leading by their colors to America was connected to a push button thus enable the operation to be carried out. I was an eye-witness to this notable incident. My boss, learning that a special train was to have ran on the occasion for the white Americans entreat me to board the train with tool bag and other pieces of tools. It was a packed train, I had was to stand between two coaches on the platform. I was not opposed. The great Governor Goethals was on the scene, thousands of spectators with wrist watches and cameras were all alert watching and waiting for the final minute, the specified time was less than two minutes, then the blast, water and dirt were hurled into the air, coming down spraying everybody in its wake.

There was a necessity for distinction between skilled and un-skilled, or common labor-resulting in the division of employees into two categories, the skilled were classified as Gold and the un-skilled or common, Silver.

...

#### EMPLOYMENT

<u>Years</u>	<u>Place</u>	<u>Dept. or Div.</u>	<u>Occupation</u>	<u>Foremen</u>
1906-1907	Culebra	Labor & Quarters	Utility-man	Messrs R.E. Wood Stewart Christian
1907-1909	"	F.R.R. Commsy.	Store & Saleman	Fred Morris
1909-1910	On Line	F.R.R. Tel.Tel.	Lineman	Kratz & Anderson
1910-1912	Empire	"	Clerk	" M/C8115
1912-1917	On Line	Consolidated Tel. & Tel.	Cable Spl. Hlpr.	Strauss Denny
1917-1918	Bal. Old Stm. Flnt	Electrical	Repairman	Granberry
1918-1920	"	"	Clerk	"

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1920-1930	Mira. Old Stm. Plant	Electrical	Office Hlp.	Lawton Hazeldine M/023474 Youchim
1930-1932	Pedro Mig.	Elec. Shop	"	
1932-1938	Mira. Diesel Sta.	Electrical	"	McCaslin Houser Ward

1938            Voluntarily retired my employment through impaired health after working 32 years and 2 months continued service mingled with hard life and very little rest.

Suddenly emergency calls some days terminate into nights away from home without proper food and water sometimes shelter. Uncomfortable nights, at times in wet clothes, especially when got left by last means of transportation for home.

Married for betterment, my wife took sick, enter the Ancon Hospital, stayed forty days and forty nights. Late one day for five minutes through her sickness. Death of my only child. Buried in Culebra.

Pay checks were issued to all employees. Apart from two terminal pay offices a monthly pay train is operated to pay all others at diferent locations.

Departmental changes, transfers, change of foreman, was all for the good of my service and thus enable me to familiarize and acquaint myself with the various places worked and views.

Respectfully submitted,  
D. T. LAWSON

Leacock, Joseph

I the undersinged do certify that thes statements are correct I was born in island of barbados in the year eightteen eighty eight. I singed a contrac in the year nineteen hundred and six to work for the Ismainian Canal. On the arival of the Boat the Contrac where seleted they where place on a train and where taken to there destination to comply with there respettive contrac. I the undir singed comence my duty with the sannitary deparment the chife line keeper name was Mr. Helbertsin nineteen o seven I took sick I spend a little time in the hospital I dont precisley remember how long but after I came out of the hospital I work for the Railroad in nineteen o eight on the docks then I shif the yard ofice Mr \_\_\_\_\_ was the time keepr Mr \_\_\_\_\_ was the pusher the I left and took employment whit the Ancon hospital the head nurse name was Miss Merchek she was the one that employ me and gave me a note to take to the doctor for a examina-tion he employed me at fithteen dollars a month and there I did my service until I retired

JOSEPH LEACOCK  
D.R. 4474

LeCurrieux, Jules E.; Calle M 759, Room 10; San Miguel  
Dist., Panama City, R.P.

For the Societies information I the author of the history of my life spent on the Canal Zone from the 14 of Jan 1906 when arrived here as an emigrant from the island of Barbados B W I to help dig the Canal, yet though I was not a Barbadian, I was born in French Guiana Marmi de Cayenne as French citizen taken to Barbados B W I my mothers home, and was raised, and educated until prior to my being emigrated here. I was born in French Guiana Jan 11, 1889. I landed here on the Isthmus Jan 14, 1906 and commenced employment after dinner the same day with several others on the top of Gold Hill, that crossed the Canal from Paraiso on the East bank to Rio Grande on the West bank. Our employment was that of drilling holes 20 ft. deep to be loaded with powder to be blasted and tear the old hill down. With the loss of many lives, we have a Water Way. During same digging I changed my location to Gatun on the Atlantic side where I was employed on the railroad tracks during which time I got struck in my right eye, and was laid in the Colon Hosp. the whole year 1907 still with the loss of sight in my right eye, yet I got out and obtained employment in the Cristobal Hotel and was there the whole year 1908 and left and returned to Gatun, and was again employed, helping complete the digging of the Canal for the valves to set in, before the walls were built, during which time I was transferred to take care of the lumber yard supplying the carpenters of the Locks with lumber, when I was again sent to work on completing the cement shed that was being built to meet the arrival of the first load of cement on its arrival and continued until the first load arrived when I was placed in charge of the gang when the and the boss got in calling for some protection from the swallowing of the cement dust, and he blamed me, and discharged me, and as he was the biggest boss of the Locks, any where I got a job, and he saw me, he had me discharged until I had to leave Gatun, so I departed the next day to another section called Gorgona, and immediately obtained employment in the Car Repair shop as an air brake helper cleaning cylinders and adjusting their breaks all railroad cars until I was transfered to Pedro Miguel when that shop was moved to Balboa Flats below the Adm Bldg, when again same shop was moved to Mech Div where I was employed for years until one day we were all sent to work in an oil tanker and we could not take it on account of the scent of gas from the oil, and we all decided to get on deck and make our complaint, and boys to talk for them, and the boss to them, if you men want to work get back down in the

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hole, but you get up in the office for your clearance, Sir. On my way to the office, I heard a car blowing its horn, and I was made to understand that 2 of the very men were damaged that was returned back to work in the hole of the oil tanker. I may have been one, God knows. The very next morning I was employed by the Fortification Div at Punta Bruja, and employed by District Engrs until I was again sent to do work that was not in my line so fault could be found for my discharge, which did happen. So Sir on my way home I met one of my old foremen who questioned me and told me to call on him the next morning when he employed me and turned me on to work right away, and continued in same employment until my employer was leaving on retirement, and just as the new boss took over I was laid off and in seeking employment I found same, but I had to pass Doctors Exam and was turned down and placed on the D R - with Cash Relief with 23 years actual service with the Panama Canal and only received on my first Cash Relief check Jan. 1939 \$17.50 when I was in the expectation of \$23.00 as per Bill passed by the U S Congress granting \$1.00 for each year of actual service exempting services rendered previously with the I C C, and after when I was transferred from the Dist Engrs to be employed by the Dpt Engrs U S Army at Corozal until 1937 making a total of 31 years service rendered by me to the U S Govt from my first employment Jan 14, 1906 helping dig the Canal until it was completely dug — Commencement of the construction of the entire Locks until their completion, for which I worked in all three, that I was witness of the breaking away of a scaffold at Pedro Miguel losing 2 lives. I also remember seeing a time keeper being taken as a dead corpse after talking to me 20 minutes previous at the forebay of Gatun when it was first being constructed and several more instances — of which I thank the Lord I also have seen the water entered in the Canal, the first ship pass through and when it was returning to the Atlantic side. I also had the pleasure to work at Bruja Point until those 4 16" guns were all installed and tested for the protection of the Panama Canal. Mr. Editor, Sir, This is my full statement of my entire 57 years of existence on the Canal Zone and this Republic out of my 75 years of existence on this earth.

I thank God with all my heart and may He forever bless the U S Govt and continuously be her protection —

While I remain respectfully  
your humble servant  
JULES E. LECURRIEUX

For your Societies information, I the author of this letter beg to state here that I am a French born citizen, of French Guiana on Jan 11 1889 and was taken to Barbados BWI when a kid where I was educated, and when I was aged 17, I contract, and was emmigrated to the C Z to start digging the Canal and commenced employment after dinner the very day I landed at Paraiso, Jan 14, 1906, and several others to start drilling holes on the top of Gold Hill that extended across the Canal, from Paraiso on the East bank, to Culebra on the West bank where I continued until I obtained another employment on the Atlantic side, the section of Gatun, where I was employed on the railroad tracks until I was made a subforeman for a few years until I was made foreman of same gang, when my foreman was transfered elsewhere. During same time there was no need for so many track foremen, so I transfered to the lumber yard, to supply lumber to the carpenters engaged in the commencement of the building of the forms for the culverts and sides of the lock walls, when I was again transfered to help in the building of the cement shed where the cement was to be unloaded when it should have arrived, while I continued in same employment until same first load came, and I placed in charge of same gang, and it was not a customary employment many of the poor fellows could not stand it and fell on the job, and because I spoke to Supervisor of the whole of that Div he got mad with me and ran me off the job, yet I obtained employment, but any where he saw me employed he made the foreman run me off until I had to leave Gatun for good, and my next abode was the Section of Gorgona where I was employed as air brake man on the cylinders of all the railroad cars that came in the shop to be repaired until I was transfered to section of Pedro Miguel where I continued employment until I was again transfered to the Car Dept Balboa Shops Mech Div where I was employed until one day I was sent with many others to work on an oil tanker, and we could not make it, we decided to go on deck and talk to the big boss, when we ascended he was there, and he wanted to know what was the trouble, and the boys told him that I will tell him, as it were the story, which I did, and in response he said get back down and go to work, but you go to the office and get your clearance, and on my way, the ambulance was taking two of my same company to the hospital, for which I was glad he did not send me back down. The following day I was employed with the Dist Eniners at Bruja Point now Fort Kobbe where I and the gang was transfered to be employed by the Dpt Engrs until I was again advantaged for what reason I know not by being sent to work in a labor gang from a  
for many years, yet with all I am yet alive after seeing

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with my eyes individuals run over by trains and engines, killed by powder blasts, killed by falling off the locks, from 1906 - 1938 during my employment, and alive and still cared for the U S Govt on the D R - C R 2266

Resptfly  
JULES E LECURRIEUX

Continued

In 1906 Sir, a storehouse boss was going to employ me in the storehouse after dinner and on my way meet him I hear the train whistle blow, and saw a crowd running, and when I got there, found that it was the same gentleman I going to was killed, cut in two by the engine, thats no 1 — I afterwards was permitted to see a dynamite explosion where several workers lost their lives at Lasascadas No 2 — I was again permitted to have seen an employe who supplied material for me to deliver from the forebay for Gatun Locks brought back on a flat car in 2 pieces No 3 — I was again permitted to see workers on two occasions fall off the Gatun Locks while being employed on the mule tracks, No 4 — Sir, and I also am yet alive with my services from 1906 Jan until Oct 1, 1938 for the U S Govt on the P C with the I C C — P C — Dpt Engrs U S Army Corozal lost sight of my right eye by being struck with a stone flake by a co worker, carrying me to be hospitalized in the Colon Hospital 1 year after the left eye being affected, yet thank God I have been privileged to be able to have seen all of those occurences I have already mentioned above, and now to be on the D R C R 2266 on just what I am receiving after it. This is my full statement.

JULES E LECURRIEUX

This is to inform you that in searching all my old writings I came across this one which I believe you would be interested in, so I posted same to you in behalf of the Society, if used I will thank you very much for a copy, Sir.

Life and Living of the West Indian Negroes  
on the Canal Zone from  
1906 — and on

To those who are interested in the above named and title of this book, let me the author so disclose my intire life

LeCurrieux, J. E. - p.5

spent on the Canal Zone after being landed here as a contract laborer brought here on Jan 14 - 1906 and on for the knowledge of those Americans who are not acquainted with same, also Panamanians and foreigners, as to how the Canal became a Panama Canal as it is today.

...I the undersigned was landed at the Royal Mail dock in Aspinwall Colon to work dig, and build the, this, Panama Canal, after having a rough start, which is I as many hundred others, having been contracted for same had to pass a very rigid medical & physical examination prior to leaving our native homes to cross the Atlantic to arrive in Colon, and distributed in groups along the lines of the Canal Zone where the amount of men were needed and to our surprize we were unloaded off the train as animals and not men, and almost under strict guard to camps, and in some sections to canvas tents, with bunks on each side around 8 long and 3 high making a total of 96 in 1 camp, then we were taken to a kitchen and each of us were given 1 plate, 1 cup, 1 spoon, and a meal, then those utensils were ours -- the price to be taken out of our first pay, then were distributed to several gangs that needed men until all were distributed to work that half day, and at the close of the work day period we were given a meal ticket valued 30 cts that ticket entitled each one of us to an evening meal and a ticket blank for our coffee in the next morning previous to starting our next days work, and a midday meal, also a ticket which entitled each one of us to a shelter for the previous night, and mind you if you lost it you better beat the bush that night or any other night you could not produce that blank, or go hungry the next day, all of that continued until our first pay day, when, if none of us was provided with a blanket the past two weeks, we could purchase one, and a pillow, and a few cakes of soap to wash our dishes and clothes for there were no women around those days, we had to do all of our washing on Sundays, and if we did not have two sets of working clothes, and the rain was fell and we got wet we surely had to wear the same wet clothes to work the next day. Again in my days there were no electric lights all storn lanterns and at 9 P.M. an old piece of rail would knock that meant go to bed no sound and at 5 a.m. get out of bed, go to work, the men food was not so hot but we were not allowed to cook around the camps, and no restaurants around anywhere, neither women, only in Panama or Colon and not even then for if those who felt to take a trip to Colon or Panama, if you were thirsty and wanted a drink of water you better lug a or lug a bottle of soda water, in

those days no beer, no soda water as now, even the working men had to drink water from the creeks in the mountains, but the Canal had to be dug. — In those days there were no 10 or \$15.00 shoes, you had to buy the Chinese Walk Overs, what they call Pusses, a cloth shoes with rope soles. So just ~~Recant~~ and think of the life of pioneers of this Big Ditch the West Indian Nigger, of the 1903 to 1908 gang. Now here comes a little improvement the West Indian Negro woman began to immigrate here, then the poor old bastards found themselves wives of their ~~tribes~~ and began to live like human beings and not beasts, or slaves, they found someone to cook them a decent meal, to wash their clothes, some one to be a companion, and then to find a clean and decent place to sleep, and started a new generation of West Indian Panamanians, to the best respect and ability holding all classes of positions in the Republic. Now here goes we have lived to see the old Ditch dug, we have heard of how many thousands, who lost their lives in the job, by yellow fever, malaria, diarrhoea, typhoid fever, on the railroad, dynamite explosions, on the Locks as I have seen several fall 75 ft, even 20 ft from one one time, and hundreds by drowning since it was dry and built. Who dug the Canal? Who suffered most ~~even until now~~? Who died most? Who but the West Indian Negroes. But dear friends that was not all, having seen the Canal dug, the large grand locks, dams, and spillways all complete and some of the worlds largest ships passed safely through from end to end, was not all, there was still another great job to be done, that was the protection from tidal waves by building the Colon break water, and then another greater protection and that was from the enemy by air, land, or sea, and that was by the construction of all types of guns and fortresses at both entrances, and also the parallel lines on either side of the boundary line, of which most were West Indian Negroes who did this work, such digging gun pits, building concrete, and carrying cable on their shoulders for miles in the woodland, up hill, and down hill, to some tower or other, until their shoulders were ~~quads~~ as mines was, but the Canal was built but not complete without that protection and you may still ask the question Who helped to install the Canals protection, the West Indian Negroes as myself, for I know, even from the last Fortified island on the Pacific to the quarry in Portobello where these solid hard rocks in tons sizes were to help build the stony gate valves. I the undersigned was in all of this great mystery building of connecting the two oceans together, or I would better say emptying one into the other at correct times; and this my statement and full knowledge and experience of the bldg of this present Panama

LeCurrieux, J. E. - p.7

Canal from Jan 14, 1906 until I was terminated in general in 1938 and placed on a Cash Relief of only \$17.50 per month up to my last allotment, which was too small to live on, paying out light food and clothes, and at present a hundred times worst, for any human being to live on, and this my full recompenses from services in 1906 to 1938 serving as from a water boy, on and up until was now having a fair knowledge of several mechanical skills but not available to us around, so most of us just have to take what we are allowed until those who are in authority some day to reconoider our réal needs and distresses, and oblige us with something more decent, and I trust the God of Heaven will still grant me health and strength to live long enough to see that day, when I will rejoice in the labor of my helping hand in the completion of one of the worlds greatest mysteries and that is the bldg and completion (not that of Solomons Temple) but of this big and great waterway — The Panama Canal. And I ever how to say, God bless its handy work, its operation and existence. For throughit I had my existence from the age of 16 even until this day, I am sheltered and pitanced to her ability so far until time may smile, when a consideration may be considered of us poor old time Canal diggers, especially those of my type, who have seen and experienced days, and to survive even until this day, should receive worthy praise by all the authorities, and all of its employees Especially when we just think that our lives have been spared even until this day. Acknowledging that the Panama Canal are one of the mysteries of the world, I trust that the God of Heaven will ever have her under His Divine Protection, and its directors may ever allow themselves to be led to do, and whatsoever they ask to do will His Divine Guidance, and justifiable to one and all, and to God and man. Thank you.

JULES LECURRIEUX

Lewis, James A. (or S.); 17 St., House 393, Rio Abajo,  
Panama, R.P.

This is my story as far as memory goes I was Emigrated from the Island of Antigua BWI. We came on a Big Steamboat Called The Solan We land in Christbal the 1st day of May 1906. We slept in a Big Warehouse that night Of course the American Government took care of us. The next morning we got breakfast. Next we was on a Special Train and that Train was stoped at every Secion or Station from Gatune to Paraiso and a certain amount of men was left at these Stations I was left at a Section called Cucarach next to Paraiso. When we came off the Train each man was given a cot to sleep on in the camps that was provided for us. When you fell sick you have to go the Dispensary in Paraiso and if you were serious the doctor would send you to Ancon Hospital; well the name Ancon was changed many many years ago to Gorgas Hospital.

My first and greatest experence was the steam shovel. The way the engineer worked that lever you should see that long arm slide out and down coming up withe the bucket full or dirt and rocks and dumps it on the train with flat cars called Ledger Wood I was operated in Ancon Hospital in the month of June 1906 for hernia. The doctor I think call it enlarge glands he told me I could not do any hard work for 1 month so I got a switchman job from thence to a breakman, and then to a fireman in the Transportation Division Paraiso. There was drilling gangs and powder gangs The drilling gangs drill the holes in the earth with diamon or tipod drills. The powder gangs come and fill the holes with dynamite and ram it and some time the hole gets hot and explodes I was a breakman whin this happened on the back of Pedro Miguel We was getting a load of dirt at the steam shovel and a powder gang was on the other side filling the holes with dinamite and raming it Well we got our train load of dirt and left the steam shovel in 15 minuits there was an explosion and that powder gang was blown up On the track lines you could see parts of mans body Its an awful site to see.

I was working on the Locks as Carpenter in Gatun. The great big iron gates that was build in the Locks was done by

Lewis, J. A. - p.2

contractors named of McClentic Marshal; accidents were numberless The walls of the Locks is 75 feet from top to bottom

The dirt and rocks that was taken out of the Canal some of it was dumped in Balboa and some of it in Laboca so a part of La Boca and a part of Balboa is dump land

Fort Amador is dump land A part of the sea was dumped up and becomes a regular road. Trucks cars train everything travels on that road to the fort. I worked in Fort Amador in the year 1937 carpenter.

Lucas, Rufus C.; Apartado 476, Panama, R.P.

I, the undersigned, born in Jamaica, June 25th, 1888, left Kingston, Jamaica on the "S.S. CLYDE", April 3rd, 1913, bound for Colon to work for the Panama Canal. My first job with the Isthmian Canal Commission, as it was called at that time, was with the Storehouse Department at Empire the same month of my arrival. I started to work at the rate of 10¢ an hour moving supplies around in wheelbarrows. I did this job for a short period, It will be difficult to recall correct dates, months, year etc. but these will be to the best of my knowledge and memory. Records will prove most of the following statements to be correct.

In 1913 before water was put in the Canal, I was living in Empire and on August 15th, 1914, 49 years ago today - - - the Canal was opened for Commerce. It was then or before that the liquor stores were ordered closed and liquor was prohibited on the Canal Zone. In 1914, I picked up a job with the Floating Gang as a carpenter and went off to Portobello. We got there one midnight where the mosquitoes by the millions were waiting for us. There were some wooden structures on top of a hill, we got up there and took them down by sections, slid them down the hill and loaded up the barge, then the tug-boat pulled it out to Cristobal. That was real hard work. I worked there for three weeks, then landed in the Gorgas Hospital formerly Ancon Hospital where I was treated for malaria as I had more than my share.

I also worked with the Dredging Division for a short period as an oiler on the Number One Grader in the Canal with a man by the name of Mr. Wright. He looked at me one day and said "you are fired right now". It was for no just cause but I couldn't talk back because in those days every white man thought he was GOD down here.

My next job was with the Municipal Engineering Division at Corozal with a Boss by the name of Mr. Brooks. He was a very tough guy, but some reason or other, he and I got along fine until reduction of force caught up with me.

Next I worked at the Aspinwall Hotel at Taboga as a waiter.

That is where I learned to swim. I worked for a short period of time and then got a job at the Balboa Commissary as delivery man for approximately four years. I got along nicely with my immediate boss who was a cork-leg man by the name of Mr. Wise. The manager at that time was Mr. Cornwall and Mr. Pearson respectively. It was there in 1920 when the employees pulled off a strike which lasted eleven days but did not materialize. Instead we got demoted in salary because it was illegal to strike against the government.

My next and last job with the Panama Canal was in February 1922 with the Health Department at Gorgas Hospital at the rate of \$30.00 a month everyday including Sundays, Holidays, Birthdays and Armistice Day from 6 A.M. to 6 P.M. If my memory serves me right, I think it was some time in 1947 or 1948 that the eight hour shift came about and I was retired in July 1950. After 17 years working at the Gorgas Hospital, Miss Davis, who was the Section Nurse at the time fired me on the sly without notifying the office. I immediately wrote a letter to the Chief Clerk who was next to the Superintendent in self-defense. He ordered me back to work immediately. During my 28 years service at the Gorgas Hospital, I met all kinds of people from all walks of life. As far as I can recall, a part of the Office staff there was as follows:

Miss McCreth, who was Chief Nurse in 1922. She was a fine old lady. She was succeeded by Miss Negle and Miss Negle's successor was Miss Telfer. They were all very nice people to work with. Male nurses such as Mr. Eddridge, Mr. Sapato and Mr. Smith were all ward nurses.

I witnessed Mr. Sapato dropped dead on the floor of Ward 14 one afternoon, while on duty. I worked with Dr. Wright in his clinic for some time. All these people died and here I am still enjoying life on the LAND OF THE LIVING at the age of 75 for which I am very thankful.

These are only sketches with many many other items left out. If I were to write the history of my life and work in full on the Isthmus of Panama it would take me about three books, but I hope these briefs will be understood. My time on the Isthmus is 50 years. During this period, I took two trips back to Jamaica, one in 1941 and again in 1944. In July, 1959, I went on a vacation to California, U.S.A., where the best of my entire life has been spent, returning to Panama in September 1960.

Lucas, R. C. - p.3

Since 1913 up to the time that I have been retired, these are some of the check numbers that were assigned to me:

136502 - 32854 - 61487 and last but not least 32273.

Yours very truly,  
RUFUS C. LUCAS

Lunche, Ange Julienne; Correo Pueblo Nuevo, Panama, R.P.

Native of Martinique. Arrived in Panama on the 12 day of December 1906 under a contract basis aboard a British Ship named So Long.

My first job on the Isthmus was with the Panama Railroad working on the track lines my salary was 10¢ per hour working for a foreman by the name of Mr. Charles. In the year 1908 got a transfered to the powder gang as an helper, this job paid 17¢ per hour at Culebra thru Gamboa, our job was to clear the way so that the water could past and the dredge could clean out the path.

One day while cleaning up after an explosion blast our foreman Mr. O'Connor was helping and a loose rock fell from above and broke his arm. Another day while working Culebra we were called to go to Miraflores to help because there was an accident, upon arrival there noticed that many co-workers had lost there lives, I can remember it was on a Saturday, upon trying to find out how did it occured I was told by another employee that the dynamite was laid all connection made and the electrician had pressed the battery lever without noticing that the lines were connected. Another day there was an accident when some men fell off a scaffold as it appeared was not built wright or strong enough and it broke away.

Our living condition was good enough for we were living in a camp at Empire there was a commissary provided for us. That is all I can remember been its so long ago. I remain

Yours Truly

McDonald, Philip; Colon Post Office, Colon, R.P.

Leaving my Island home Grenada BWI St. Georges on the 18th of May 1908 for Trinidad BWI, buying a ticket from Martin Deane & Co for \$1.00 deposition £ 5 pounds. Embarking on the S.S. Crown of Navarre ship at about 5 P.M. on same date, Reaching Trinidad next morning of the 19th May landed about mid day. Staying in Trinidad until the 27th May 08, buying a ticket for £ 2, 4s, 6d depositing \$15.00 for the Isthmus of Panama, No Passport where giving at that time;

The S.S. Magdalena R.M.S. Co. came from Barbadoes which was Headquarters then to Trinidad with a few hundreds of Imigrants, It was the 1st time in my life I ever saw such a crowd of Barbadians together. The Boat sail that night calling at two other ports, Lagaira & Savinalla reaching Colon Rep June 1st 1908. Receiving my \$15.00 deposit at Pier 3 Colon, some how I passed the purser or Costom officer and he did not asked me for my ticket which I should of given to him on disembarking — and I am now holding the portion up to now nearly 56 years ago. I have it as a passport to shew my legality of coming to this country legally. I have used it for identifying myself to obtain a cedular from the Panamanian Government.

After landing I saw there were quite a few stowaway they had them lined up by the pier and after checking they turn them over to the police.

Whilst wondering where to go I met a man who came from my Island who was kind enough to take us around to a Boarding house which was not far from the pier, just between Mason Blanche where there is an open lot now. Then he took us to Coolie Town for supper, the place was very swampy and dirty, Alligators and all kinds of muck you have to walk on board plank. Only two streets then in Colon Front str & Bottley Alley. Any-way we came back and went to bed we had terrible time with "bed bugs."

Leaving Colon June 2nd for the lines I met a friend of mine on the train from San Iablo he asked us where we were going we told him Lascascadas; he then advise us not go to Cascadas as booked for our friends were going to only work at.

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Cascadas but they reside at Bas Obispo. We took his advise and landed at Bas Obispo. Next day went for our baggage. We had a very warm reception from our schoolmates and friends; Next morning my friend took me with him to Lascascadas Cut to learn how to check a steam shovel that was digging the dirt, the Marian and Racyrus team shovel who did the digging of the Big Ditch. At that time Rain Thunder and lightning was very \_\_\_\_\_ about as the lightning flashed it caught a galvanized sheet iron afire ripped it off the small shanty and struck the Foreman of a Eupropan Spaniard right above his chin under his mouth, the shock went through his body Blood came out from his risk he was killed instantily; the other men got a stretcher and take him to the dispensary. They said he the foreman was cursing and swearing a word they call "meca condios." I was so afraid I left and went back to Bas Obispo. I wont go back to the Cut; that was my 1st sad Experience. The night of June 8th I made up my mind to go northward to Gorgona, I awoke the morning 9th 08, left about 6 AM to walk the RR track for there was no road. But the I.C.C. had notices posted along the RR track advising pedestrains when walking the track line on seeing a train coming towards you, you must not jump from one track to the other, it is safer to keep to the bank for the train noise in front of you will prevent you from hearing the noise of the other train coming back of you, for many have been killed that way already.

On reaching Gorgona CZ whilst crossing the RR track I met a friend of mine whom I knew from my home by the name of Jimmy Alexander. I becon to him and we shook hands he asked me where I am going, I said I am looking for a job, he said come with me he is going ~~be~~ be promoted to the Mess kitchen C-L-#15 at Cabello Viejo as steward and he will recomend me to his job; I said O.K. his job was a messinger at the Quartermaster's Office a LQ & S, Labor Quarters & Subsistance. He did so and I got the job starting right away. Said Jimmy is now working at \_\_\_\_\_ Chrilloe Branch Rep of Panama, "Fuerza y Luz."

I began to work as a messenger at \$30.00 per month at 10¢ per hour, 10 hours a day, & that is where I earned my first dollars. Mr. T. A. Fuller the time keeper took me around and shew me what my duties are and gave me a type writer so that I can have envelopes addressed to the different Quarter Masters on the lines when needed. ...

Gorgona a section very flat with the Chagres river running; there is one little hill midway, where the Y.M.C.A are located. A rum distillery in the middle of the river North East, belongs to one Antonio a Spaniard - And the Gorgona Shops South of Gorgona near Jamaica Town a colored section. My first night I slept at Lower Cabello Viejo a Camp. I had a terrible night with mosquitoes and the Bunk, I did not like it, I went to the Q M and he allow me to go to House #89 on top the hill south west of Gorgona Shop which was built for Colored Americans, He agreed and told the timekeeper to have me assigned to same which he did. The Colored Americans where somewhat friendly for the knew how to cook and bake their own bread, and on Saturday nights every man goes to the wash house to wash your own clothes or give it to a Chinaman for women where scares as hen's teeth. Weatherhead was room mate. I began to eat my meals at the Mess kitchen No 01#15 belongs to the I.C.C. in upper Cabello Viejo by meal tickets. The food was somewhat poor, it was a real problem for a steward to cook for so many men, the garbanzos beans was like bullets, some times red kidney beans & rice was  $\frac{1}{2}$  cooked, any way we had to fight and eat what we can until we could do better. The water was bad, when you take a drink it was like a banana stain in your mouth, rackish and heavy, you will have to look out for the water wagon when it passes to get a bucket of sterilized water for drinking purposes but you must have ice with it.

...

Mr. Spright P.O. Master they used to have a very big business every Sunday morning after pay day, i.e. in issuing money orders to the West Indies because every man is working Monday to Saturdays no time to go to the Post.

Quarter Master utility gang who take care of the Cold Storage cars coming from Cristobal daily, have to cut the block of ice in different sizes, 20,30,40,50 & 100 lbs for distribution to houses and gangs etc. Meat and vegetables to Hotel and Commissary - the foreman has about 25 to 30 men and a mule team to hawl the goods away. All the men in that gang wears shoes except the foreman a good looking man by the name of Boyce, he walk into the Ice Car as comfortable as the men; no shoes on!

My work is every day on Sundays. I go for ice full the water bottle with water & pack ice on the outside of the bottle, and if any mails are in the out going basket I'll seal and post them,

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then I am off for the day, for there is a watchman working at night by the name of Seacock. After working for a few months I have seen men who got injured somewhere coming on hand pump cars sitting senseless - sometimes both legs are cut off, mules cut down by train \_\_\_\_\_ also.

But it happened on Dec. 9th or 10th - 1908. After taking my outgoing mails to the post office whilst there 11 AM blew then I knew I was off for lunch - I left going East to cross the RR tracks, for QM office is parallel with the P.O., end to end facing North, in passing said Q.M. office, I heard the telephone ringing I could continue my way for I was off duty; But I curiously went in and took up the receiver and said Hello? Some one said Bas Obispo dispensary is speaking Yes what is it He asked do you know where the Dr. lives, I said yes will you go and tell him Bas Obispo dispensary wants him to get all his Nurses & Orderlies he has and take them to Mr. A K Stone Yard Master Office, he will put them on a flat car for Bas Obispo for there is a Big Explosion there, many are killed and are dying, I said OK, I forget my lunch now; I went up the little incline which was called Hillsbrow to the Dr. McPherson House he was sitting on a big arm oak chair, I gave him the message almost in one breath he never hesitated he got up from the chair and said Whoope went into the kitchen and I heard him say emergency - I guess he spoke to his wife who was making up his lunch - I was on my way back, I look back I could see him going across the street for the Dispensary was across from his house. I then went upstairs the Post Office where Mr. R C Shady & S D Roper leaves I gave them the message and they both got up and went too.

I happen to know the Dr. name being a messenger I was somewhat acquainted with the names of houses for I had to go and post notices on many of them when they do break sanitary rules or regulations Afterwards I went late for lunch. I have never made any official declaration to any one except casual explanation in talking to people. In those days the US men who work near the Hotel don't go and eat at 11 AM they go and rest first and when going back to work they go and eat then to work. That was and is still the biggest explosion ever took place on the Isthmus Mr. Shady told me the Explosion took big huncks of dirt and track line from one side to the other side. They are now widening it now 300 ft to 500 ft opposite Gamboa stockade its called Hot Obispo it caught the men on the trail up hill going

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to their mess kitchen for lunch. Its said the blast was over-loaded and a primature explosion. You can see bits of fingers hand foot, head scatter all over the place.

In order to give the U.S. employees a little bit of oheer so that they can put up this gigantic task of building the Panama Canal the ICC authorities inagurated a band called the ICC Band Built band stand for the purpose and have the Band play hot cheering pieces of music on Sunday evenings they will play these most hottest, American pñeces namely, Every Body's doing it Now, and, When I talk I always talk with Billy - if I could write music I would of written the notes and words for I bill remember them. My immediate Boss Mr. S D Roper was a member of the Band he used to play the trambone solo and Mr. Brown his friend used to play a cornet the last time I saw Mr. Brown he was working at P. Miguel Locks 1919. The US employees used to enjoy themselves very pleasantly I dont remember how many they were about 15 or 20 men I think with band.

... Instrument Repair Shop, Mechanic Shop, & Car Repair shops lies east of RR track North of Jamaica town a colored settlement south of Gorgona. Baseball park lower Cabello Viejo west of Chagres River. It was a pleasure to see the native women on the banks of the shallow Chagres river washing and beating the clothes with a big \_\_\_\_\_, and the clothes white as snow. I work at the Q.M. office from June 9th 08 to June 30th - 1909.

After leaving Gorgona, I enjoyed myself from the 2nd & 4th of July Went to Panama City for the 1st time visit friend and realitions, took the 4th of July free train for Colon but on reaching Culebra the train was so full it was almost crawling so myself and 9 more friends decided to get out, which we did. One of the boys knew a French man leaving at Golden Green Culebra CZ. Visit him and making new friends, we then headed for Empire CZ passing the \_\_\_\_\_ at Camacho walk to Empire proper met a soda shop call "Swains Ice House" a Trinidad man; he had the same kind of cool soda we had in our homes ie the patent bottles with the marble inside, we where delighted to meet that kind of drink so we gave justice to ourselves. After that we went lower down town at end of Empire we met about 5 more school mates, Oh Boy we shure had a wonderful time singing songs until time to take train to go back to Gorgona with the understanding I was going

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back to Empire in a few days for a job. "I learn to write fast in the comsy" of Empire. On the morning of 9th July I went of R.F Station to take the train to Empire in search of a job; On reaching the depot I met a time inspector by the name of US Mr. Fuielle he is French but became an American citizen, and was a catholic by seeing me in Church on Sundays he became attached to me, not seeing me on the job at the Q.M. he asked me whats wrong. I told I am not working there any more, He also asked me where I am going, I told him I am going to Empire in search of a job, He then told me when I got of Empire depot I must look for him, he will recomend me to a man who wants a salesman. I said O.K.

True to his word after landing I saw him Walked to a building and came through the back and Becon to me. I went in to him. He introduced me to a gentleman by the name of H P Stevens in Englishman, who said to me can you write I said yes, he then gave me a piece of paper to sign my name. He then shewed me a place to put my hat etc, I waited in front of a grocery counter, a Colored man came to me and asked me if Boss put work I said yes, then he shewed me a Barrell of sugar to stowered in the Bin. I began to put them any how, then said that is not the way if you put them that way, the Bin wont hold them all and then he showed me how. His name is Oscar Ritchie now dead in Jamaica Section head. Commissary open 8 AM to 1 PM and 3PM to 7 PM. I was told afterwards the uniform is white shirt stiff collar & Blk pants Blk bow tie.

The salesman had to write every item purchase, there where coupons books issue at that time in \$2.50, \$5.00 \$10.00 for Silver rools employees and \$15.00 for Gold rools employees, they consists of 20¢, 10¢, 5¢, & 1¢ pieces denomination after they make the purchase you added your slip tore the original off give it to the costomer, him or her takes it to the cashier for paying, the cashier reciving the payment stamp the Bill paid, tearing the stub off and keep it. The duplicate you keep to collect the goods put them on the counter, a checker which is a Gold Employee checks the articles put them into a paperbag until costomer comes for same; they were quite a few young American lads who learn to check in Empire Comsy, Mr. George Englekee, Mr. Nick, Fred Metksir, Russell Parsons, Emmett Zuimer, Guy Robinson. Being a salesman was not new to me, for I had 2

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years in that line in my home before I came to this country. I worked in the Silver Grocery from July 9th - 09 to March 1910 when Corozal Comsy was to be opened they took the most experience salesman to be sent there; they took Charles Alveraz from British Guiana who was in charge of the Gold Grocery & the Manager asked for his best helper and Ritchie recommended me, so I was promoted to take charge of Gold Grocery although there was a vast amount of Vairaities than the Silver Grocery. I had to figure or guess how much bread you will need for trade For there was a big trade at evenings for both Gold & Silver pastry and special orders for Birthday cake must be placed at least 3 days in advance so is Ice Cream; and give same to the Clerk and he will telephone to Cristobal daily. My hardest problem was to figure enough bread to take care of the costumers, because Empire Comsy was the 3rd biggest on the lines, especially when McClintic Marshall & Co was building Gatun Lock Gates there was a special labor train coming in. Oh boy you better have goods to sell, onions 2½¢ potatoes, dabbage codfish 7¢ lb, sugar 17¢ 5 lb bag, bread French loaves 4¢ - Mothers and pan loaves 5¢ - everything cheap. We had to work; also taking counter orders for delivery the next day. When closed the doors at 7 P.M. we have to dispatch every costomer in there sometimes to 9 PM. The route for delivery to house are designated as Big Camacho Small Camacho, Big Empire & Small Empire ....

After working for 2½ years in Grocery Section I was asked by the manager Mr. J H Johnson to take a change to see if I can correct the condimonation in Cold Storage Section it was too big. I went and it did not take me any long time to find out the trouble, I found out some one was afraid of the coldness of the Vegetable Room. When the Fresh Vegetalbes comes they simple throw it above the old ones in there; so when the salesman Preston Baily wants any veg he simple grab the 1st bag he come in contact leaving the old ones there. I had to take all the vegetaables out and make a clean sweep then I called the Manager and shewd him the trouble, he had to give him a clearance. Now I had a terrible time to sell those spoiled vegetables. Mr. Johnson had to ask the Hotel steward if he will buy these vegetables at a reduced price he agree for soup making and salads, thats he way I got out of that mess. All that work and carefullness I was only making \$45.00 per month.

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After a few months I things going pretty good then Mr. J H Johnson resign on account of sickness and R C Teague came acting he was shot-lived and D. W. Stepens from Gatun came and took charge He and I could not get along he gave a clearance for insurbodination; I took the clearance to Mr. D W McCormick who was travelling Inspector and he took me to Ancon Commissary 1914. It was just finish built by the Building Division under the supervision of Mr. J. S Christ who married to one of Mrs. Morrison daughter of Gorgona. Mr. Hess was the Manager a soft speaking man He did not stay long he resign; then came R. C. Teague he and I could not get along. He fired me giving a bad clearance. I took it to Major Grove who was Chief Quarter Master for redress after taking my clearance from me he read it. The Major called Mr. Teague by telephone rousing him up telling him to change that clearance. I took the clearance from the Major at Balboa Heights walked to Ancon Commy their I got a new and good clearance so I can look for another job. I called Mr. Alpha Robinson who was at Gatun Comssy who told me to go to Mr. H. Smith at Pedro Miguel Comsy and he will put me to work, which I did and got to work at P.M. Comsy. Whilst there a Manager who ~~knew~~ me at Empire comsy saw me and want me to work for him at Gamboa Comsy. He made a request to Mr Jacobson General Manager at Cristobal and ask for my transfer. Mr. Ben Jacobson answered saying if my transfer will not hamper Mr. Smith Comsy he can allow me to go. So I got transfer to Gamboa Comsy which was 2 small box cars coupled together just south of the present PR station now for RR station at that time was on the bank of the Canal. His was Mr. Vital, I was sorry I went. I reached ther I thought it was like P. Miguel - we had no storeman we had to do the loading and unloading of box cars do our cleaning and take care of selling to the costomers one accountant, C Bowen McLean & McD We asked for a storeman or an increase nothing doing and the worst of it Mr Vital got transfer to some other Comsy I got stuck we had to take inventory 3 times per month 10th - 20th, 30th of the month after business hours, and take the sheets to our homes do the \_\_\_\_\_ and calculate them so as to turn them to the accountant as early as possible No over-time being paid No increase coming I did not like it I resign.

I got a job at Gamboa Signal station lasted one month Laid of in preference to a retired U.S. salior. Whilst working at Gamboa Comsy their was a contract given to Walker and Torbot to make the concrete blocks for the Cristobal brake water for the harbor, and the day they made 100 of them they had a big feativ

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the crane and mixture was back by the hill midway.

...

We the liners of Culebra, Empire, Lascadas & Bas Obispo made a petition to Col G Goethals to allow us to live in those sections, He said in his answer that the Panamanian Government is against; I am now retired since May 1954 I am vex yet for not allowing me to continue in the job I had at that time, at the Cristobal pier gate as a watch man I could of put in 15 more years there and get Civil Service

PHILIP MCDONALD  
D.R. 7256

Thanking you, I could write plenty more but I am getting old, I am now entering my 75th birthday 12/19/63.  
St. John's parish Island of Grenada B.W.I.

McEnnis, Luther; Third of November St., House 234, Room No. 9,  
Panama, R.P.

My name is Luther McEnnis; I started to work in Panama in 1904, with The Fumigating Gang. The first Governor was Mr. Magoon, and I worked with his gang from 1904 to 1906. On conclusion of this work I acquired employment of the same year, 1906, at Basobispo, employed by the Water Company as a fireman attending the boiler which supplied the water for the first marines that came to the Isthmus. The foreman at that time was Mr. Cromtore. I worked until year 1909. The same year, 1909, I was employed as a brakeman in Bas Obispo after quitting the Water Company. The Yardmaster was Mr. Barnett.

I was transferred from Bas Obispo to Pedro Miguel in the same position, as brakeman on dirt train, holding this position until 1915. After I was transferred as a switch tender, in East La Boca, until 1916. The same year, 1916, I was employed on the Docks Pier 18, after being laid off as switch tender. Leaving the Dock employment I was in Panama as a cook. After working for some time in Panama, I returned to The Panama Canal as a Cook in The La Boca Restaurant, from where I was transferred to the Pacific Clubhouse, as a Cook, from 1937 to 1950, when I received my retirement.

signature typed

McKenzie, Z. H.; 7<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> Martin Street, Spanish Town P.O., Jamaica.

Reading my daily news paper the Gleaner Jamaica where the Isthmian Historical Society announces a competition for the best true Stories of life and work on the Isthmus of Panama. In year 1906. I leave Jamaica my native Island for Panama arrived at Colon on one of those English Passenger Steamer that ply between Jamaica & Colon. about 48 hrs run reached Colon at about eight o'clock a.m. Having no realative in the Town I had to make friends there. In order for me to get by. Around 10 oclock a.m. I was told to get ready for the Train to Panama City. So I did. By twelve oc. P.M. the train leave for Panama City. by five or Six oc. P.M. I were landed in the City of Panama You can Judge the Conditions in Panama City In those days. I was taken to a Hotel on Central Ave. Run by a Jamaican old timer. he treated us kindly & Hospitable. for a few days. Getting short of cash I then Insist in getting a Job. the following day I went to the American Hospital Ancon on the Hill. fortunately I got a Job from the Chief Nurse. to work from 6 oc. P.M. To 6 A.M. It was a tough Shift but I accep'd it. free meals & free Bed. Within a few mounths I leave the Hospital for a better Job. more money. In the Canal Engenering Dep Balboa. One mounth later I was Transferred to Culebra C.Z. as a Foreman In the Lumber yard Dep. There I spent many mounths. Condition did not Suitable to me So I Transferred to the Time Keeping Department Empire C.Z. There I worked untill the Canal be came a thorough water way. My exper-ience I gathered from the Canal I cannot express. my brain get-ting old & weak hence I canot retain all that I Saw. History from the Canal will tell you of the great Explosion we had in Bas Obispo C.Z. Preparation was made to Shoot down a high Hill In the Centre of the water way on Sunday A.M. Unfortainly on Saturday about 1230 P.M. the blast went off killing hundreds of people. I Just leave the Gang to eat my lunc. at the office a half mile away when I heard the Phone rang. I went to ans. the report calling for help. I ran to the Spot & Saw what happened oh it was a day of Sorrow for the living. After a rough it be came calm. the Canal Construction came to closed. My life has been Spared to Sec the beging and the end of this great water way. The Completion of the water way Brought great Desolation on the W.I. Employees. Some of us were Transferred to other Places. others were Sent Home to different Islands. The wage Scall during the Canal Conscrution was So Small that we could not put by any Savin; in the Bank. hence the meajority of ous left Empty handed. to lived or die. of which many died from a weak heart.

Terminated from the Compleation of the water way I were Sent back to the Health Department at Corozal C.Z. There I workd many years as a Store Keeper untill the end of my Service for the Panama Canal Company. 45 years Services. \$55 Retirement Pay. I deserve better Consideration. But who is to be blaimd? I have 4 Children 3 Boys 1 Girl all was Born on the

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C.Z. 1 Boy is living in Panama City others are Here in  
Jamaica. In case of death Communicate to my Son Mr. Arthur  
McKenzie 38 White Church St. Spanish Town P.O. Jamaica.

I am  
Yrs truly  
Z.H. MCKENZIE  
Dr. 5271

Mark, John Thomas; Box 1497, Colon, R.P.

I the undersign, arrived in Panama July 29th - 1907, on the S.S. Laplata, R.M. at 8 a.m. Monday morning, I was taken to the then Section Gorgona, arriving there by train about 10:30 a.m. Tuesday 30th - I started to work in the lumber yard from thence to the Machine Shop, as blacksmith Helper, Then to Bas Obispo Shop in Dec of same year - at Gatun Commissary, as a utility man opening of the Mindi Sec of the Canal, I work in the drilling gang, Blacksmith Shop, Car-repairs Dept., other Points of service, according to your ability, fireman on the Derrick that unload the rock from Porto Bello for the erection of the present locks (Gatun) Transferec to Mt. Hope as fireman on the derrick Crane which dug the foundation for the present water work, (Plants) next on a pile driver, same place, as a driver. next to Gatun as Electrical Helper, until the opening of the locks as Telephone operator in the Control House

#### Interesting Experience & People

I note with care how the gold Employees was served with their supplies from the Comsy, Truck was driven by mules, from the various corrals Some one was employed to prepare wood & coal for the kitchen, Electric light was scarce, street lamps on poles & hand lantern had was to be used, I experience how the water was pumped out of the Mindi Canal, over flowed by the Chagres River 1908-or-1909- two hydrolic pumps was set up on the side of the channel & thro the water out before further excavation could go on, the making of the locks from the foundation, metal form was put in place for the culvert in the Center wall, also wooden forms for the bottom of the locks, stony gate valves, float well's etc, Running of cables from the various transformer room, chain fenders, up the Control House which now can be seen, Building of the miter gate by McClintic & Marshall lot of death meantime by falling off scaffolds, etc. 75 ft. belows also the great tower with take the concrete in bucks to be lowred down from the bottom of the lock until its completion, men was also employed to go around to each gang in the digging of the Canal with quinine 2 gal bottle each for the men to keep away fever - one was white & the other read - which we drank cheerfully their was no time to idle, your meal ticket was your logging check for you to sleep in the Camps, or you be taken to the Judge the next morning to find out why you dont

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work - The People to whom we have to deal with was of genial disposition, all American at that time, working condition was good no time to idle, whether it be storm or otherwise, we went through bravely, living conditions was fair Very little to complain about we did everything with satisfaction to our selves & our superior officers; I was never privelege to see a native of this country working on the Canal

I also experience the removing of the former rail road to its present location. Sams was remove from the direction of the north approach wall west side, their was a town of colored people residing their, so called Jamaica Town, the cemetery was duged up & the remains caried away to be dump for building other site of the Canal, the main road for the train was through the position of the gatun lake, use to be called Black Swamp, lots of marshes water & bird inhabit, until to go further to the other small settlement where people live, in the direction of San Pablo, their was a large iron bridge to cross, with said R.R. on the side of the Gatun spillway was a small village, people lived, & a Catholic church bell ring from outside in the yard. This was demolish, piles was driven to keep back a small river between their & Jamaica Town. This complete with the excavation dug out of the various section of the Canal, drawn by several Engines (Locomotive) only one trip could be made per day over the R.R.

In preparing the new R.R. piles had was to be driven hill remove, by steam shovels use of dynomite to blass down the hill lots of life lost in the meantime. I also experience how electricity was formed on the locks by Testing Engineers, \_\_\_\_\_ & Whitehead Stillwell & myself was their helper, this was done by filling a barrel of water, & the resistant was place in it, in the Transformer room 749 Gatun, also the handling of the switchboard in the Control house, putting through the tugboat Gatun, as the first telephone operation.

... It is not for the Frize so much, but a recognition from a \_\_\_\_\_, who is able to reflect on the Past I have to give God thanks to spare my life, knowing that thousands has past on through accident & otherwise, I have to thank the giver & the one who gave U.S. Government, with lasting gratitude

Yrs. Obediently  
JOHN THOMAS MARK  
DR - 1335

Marshall, Joshua; 27 Street Chorrillo #8-218; Estafeta del Chorrillo, Entrezza General, Panama R.P.

I arrived in Panama on September 3rd 1909 My first work was on Road building and other various kind of work. Most important work was in the Mechanical Division. I also work in the Boiler Shop for 7 years and for 33 years in the Mechanic Shop.

Living and working condition is favorable.

Foremans: Nunna, Kelley, W. Harrison, J. Phillips, E. Welch, J. Cason, Junker.

JOSHUA MARSHALL

Martineau, E. W.; Box 5571, Panama City, R.P.

My Father before me was a man of <sup>a</sup>gentle character, very kind in his ways and action; he would even give up his rights for peace sake, he was too soft in his day to accumulate wealth, therefore he died poor. My Mother was just the opposite, she was loving and kind to her home circle, but she was very stern in business, and upright with individuals. She would go to any extent to obtain her right, if she thought she was right. From these two peculiar combination, I was born in the Island of Grenada, West Indies, eighty-two (82) years ago. I came to the Republic of Panama May 1912, not in search of work, but to find a better field of endeavour; I brought along with me an airated water equipment which is commonly called soda factory. After I paid the duty for same, I applied for permission to operate in the Canal Zone, and authority obtained, I was established at High Street, Gatun.

After my business got going, I began making many queries about North America making an expensive enterprize in this Republic. First I was told that two French Companies, respectively with Administration Building in Panama City, which is now occupied as general Post Office for that Government, made efforts to build a Canal and failed. I further understood negotiation began with the American Government, and settlement was made with that Government for the sum of forty million dollars, (\$40,000,000) covering all their rights on the Isthmus. Some time after, negotiation began with the governments of Panama, and the U.S.S. relative to full status of the latter in the Canal question.

So far it was understood, five miles on both sides were granted for a long lease to the American Government with an annual payment of four hundred and fifty thousand dollars (\$450,000,000); after which the American named this enterprize "The Isthmain Canal Commission." It then sent its agents to Central and South America, including the West Indies, to select able-bodied men on a contract basis, at ten cents per hour, for low-grade laborers; when their services were no longer required, they were to be sent back to their native lands free of cost to themselves.

This enterprize was conducted by the first Governor of the

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Canal Zone, G. W. Coethals, who was also the supervisor of the Canal digging.

In the West Indies, the contract was proceeding slowly, then there became a slump for two reasons. (1) It was rumored that sickness and death were raging in Panama. (2) Laborers were required for Porto-a-Viego, Brazil, beyond the Amazon river. This government promised to assist the Republic of Bolivia to furnish a rail road to their borders to convey the latter products through the Amazon to the Western hemisphere. A disease called Bery-Bery was discovered in Brazil, and was more dangerous than any kind of fever, it was then decided by thousands that Panama was a better place to be, so people began to follow to the Isthmus.

At this time the Canal Commission withdrew its agents, as it was no longer necessary to use them in the West Indies. Every one who was contracted had to be in the Canal Zone, where there were accomodation provided for them. However it was discovered after the people were coming in such great numbers, the commission had to invite capitalist to build houses in all sections of the Zone, including comercial business for rent, also professional men and women were allowed to practice their profession in order to releave pressure on the government agencies in this interprize.

During spare time I visited some of the various stations where the work was most important, especially as thousands of my people were involved. I wanted to see how effectively they were giving service for which we are characterized. I found them to be in excellent spirit and were working steadily, while our Latin brothers were bringing up the rear to the best of their ability. I also querried, what great benefits would be obtained for the U.S.A. after spending million of dollars. I was told that after the earth should have divided, the world of shipping would be united, then there will be a boon for the hemisphere.

When the Commerce in the Zone reached its maximum carrying power, the Landlords, and commercial men of Panama and Colon, saw they were at a great disadvantage in business, they applied to the National Government for relief by giving temporary permits to those of us who cared to reside in both terminal cities. This was promptly granted by the Government. Slowly removal began

from Zone to terminals, this brought a problem to the Zone government, which then had to furnish labor-train to convey the workers to and from work daily. This method continued until long after construction days.

However, I continued my spare time visits to the construction areas, I then noticed, that because of the English language spoken by West Indians, there were no problem in receiving orders from the American bosses. Such was the case from office clerks to scavengers. Whenever volunteers were called upon to risk their lives to climb a boom or pole or other dangerous objects, there were always more volunteers than were required to do the job.

It was to my grief and sorrow to hear of a godd neighbor of mine receive his death one early morning, while awaiting his turn to descend into the pit where he was working at the time. At the sound of the whistle at 7:00 a.m. a service crain swung its boom into position just where he was standing and knocked him into the pit. It was a mournful morning at Gatun. Among hundreds of deaths that occured during construction days, this, and another that occured at Miraflores was most grievous to me because they were my neighbors. One bright sunny morning I paid a visit to the Mighty Culebra Cut. I saw the work men cautiously creeping up the ridges with their drills as soldiers going up Majuba hill in Mesopotamia, in battle array. With great dexterity they pressed forward in blasting and drilling, while others with water hose washing down the soft earth to make way for the gallant men who were storming the rocks with gallantry.

...

#### JUDICIAL AND POLICE DEPARTMENT

...In the early days these men were very discriminative, they disliked any individual who was not of Caucasian blood. There were two brothers, who were judges, one said in my presence in Balboa court room, that one policeman's word was as good as ten civilian's word in his court, this was clear to be seen that he was discriminative, down to the casket of his soul. After the Zone was depopulated, I went into Taxi and bus business, then under the discriminating policy which I have mentioned I and my men were always in court for frevolity; in one way or another at one time, one of the Judges scheked my record before handing down his sentence. He said I had many records. I said yes, some

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were true the others were lies by dishonourable policemen. He looked at me with displeasure, I gazed at him in a similar manner; I feared no consequences because I was fed up with their discrimination policy.

I also believed the reason why the greater portion of the people on the Isthmus hated the Americans so much was because of the policy of those departments; however, over a decade ago, this policy has been greatly changed to a better standard of human dignity. I challenge any man, anywhere, at any time, to prove that my statements in these instances are untrue. I served the Locks Division, Miraflores Branch, from 1930 to 1948, carrying workmen to and from work during that period, even in war days when the shift was placed on twenty-four-hour basis. I served on all shift. On January 25th, 1936, I was injured on the locks by a blown-out tire, that rendered me unconscious. A soldier liberty truck conveyed me to Gorgas Hospital, where I regained consciousness. I was attended by Drs. Albright and Major Mann. These statements can be verified by the Locks Officials Mr. Statwell, Myrick Maggs and others who knew me personally. In 1913 the then governor, Chester Harding appointed a Land Commission, agent to check the commission houses with the view of paying the owners and have them remove from the Canal Zone, free transportation were provided to either terminal Cities. The following year depopulation began in full force, also surplus laborers began to be repatriated while the free labor trains were still running to and from both terminal cities.

...Canal Zone Sub-police station was once established at Savana, Panama. The two-story structure is still there, just a little ahead of the fire station in that area. Two-inch water pipes were layed from the city to convay water there. ...

... The magnificent appearance of the entire length of the Canal can be characterized as a symbol of man's ingenuity at the Republic of Panama. Uncle Sam has made a great job. God Bless America, long live American Leadership.

Respectfully and sincerely,  
E. W. MARTINEAU

A MESSAGE TO THE PANAMANIAN PEOPLE

After the completion of the Panama Canal, repatriation was ordered swiftly followed by depopulation of the Canal Zone. This brought great concern among the nationals who, resided in the area. Speculation began among merchants, Land Lords and even the lowest peasant began to ask what next to be done. However the Canal Zone was to be partly evacuated. The land Lords and merchants renewed their plea to the National Government, stating it will do well to give residential status to West Indians, especially those who were in the majority during the construction of the Canal. It was then President Belisario Porras, through his sagacity and kindness upheld the proposal, and decreed for those of us who cared to cultivate the soil as follows: Five acres for each bachelor and 10 acres for married couple and after the time we may be owners by paying for titles. He further said this is Panama's contribution to West Indians for their labor in helping to dig the canal. This shows clearly we did not shoot our way as contrabands into the jurisdiction of the Republic, as many people has to say. We came with an olive branch of fellowship extending the fellowship of man to the Panamanian people although it was very difficult at the beginning to adopt ourselves to the custom and usages of the people. We did succeed in making ourselves helpful to them. We built houses in Chorrillo Calidonia, and Savanas district, we also promoted sports in the stadium area, cricket games at the stand ovals where President and Iris theaters are today. We also trained native ponies to race, our track was in Peru Avenue, after we transferred the same to Juan Franco pasture, our office was under a tree tucked with galvanized sheets. We kept in that pasture until we attracted such Panamanian figures as the late Raul Espinosa, he took up where we left off. Today it has become the greatest National sports in the Republic. There were economic crises; soup kitchens had to be opened to feed the poor. This is a small matter, it happens to all countries some time or other during the years. Once a labour union boss from the U.S.A. paid a visit ~~making~~ to the Isthmus, a boss of Panama labor union greeted him saying, "Comrade Grempfer, the U.S.A. has dumped West Indians in Panama and Colon and made a great problem for us." This was not true and did not worth the paper it was written on. "Give to Ceaser the things that are Ceaser's and unto God the things that are God's."

I have mentioned in my previous effort how the contracted

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men were taken into the Canal Zone, therefore we should not jeopardize the feelings of our good neighbors who possess such generous propensities at all times from every unit in the Canal Zone. The people should be taught more thrift than sports, too much sports without enough funds will create serious consequences, those who can afford should give alms to the poor. ...

Maynard, Manassah ; House 2182, P.O. Ab Jo, Panama, R.F.

This is to inform you that Manassah Maynard arrived on the Isthmus on April 3, 1905 (nineteen hundred and five) and started work on the 4th of April at Empire Machine Shop as a helper, repairing French Locomotives, the Foreman was Mr. George Lumby and I worked on the Job for 18 months and was transferred to the Electrical Division as an Ciler on June 10, 1906. The Engineer was Mr. Clyde Barton and I worked with him until 1910 and was transferred to Balboa Steam Plant as a Fireman. The Foreman of the Balboa Steam Plant was Mr. J. C. Smith, I worked with him until 1916 and was transferred to the Miraflores Steam Plant as an Ciler under the Supervision of Mr. Lawton an Engineer until 1927.

In 1927 I was transferred to the Deisel Station at Miraflores under the Supervision of Bill Howzer and continued working at that Station until my retirement in 1953.

Living conditions in those days was much better than now, everything was much cheaper, i.e. Steak @ .12 Lb., Codfish @ .08 Lb., Salad Oil .08 per qt., Onions @ .02 Lb., Red Salmon @ .12 tin and a large tin of Ham cost \$1.20 ea.

Everything was much cheaper, even though the rate of pay was small, so there were no complaints.

Merchant, J. T.; Gamboa Post Office, Gamboa, C.Z.

Arived on Isthmus 1910. Start work over torow point as Drill helper around Star Drill. Supervisor Mr Brondy General Foreman Mr. Hill. Foreman Mr. Young. and Hand Drill Foreman Mr. Taff. in 1911. Myself and five others was ask to get out about half a dozen holes for the morning, about six o'clock that night rain was pouring down. The Hill slide, causing one death in few days, and I was nock down cause me much suffering for about 10 days. and last of two jaw teeth. that was my first acident, I undergo serval others. But in 1913 at Corzal in a powder gan, in care of Mr Robert. we had a big blow up causing many death. I came very near to it. but by God help I am one among survie. In 1914 my pardener got kill while myself and him was working at May-Flowers Spilway on nightshief, around a crain, That job was run by a color American by the name of Jim Morgan and Mr. Smith a white American. I was working on one slide of the Bucket while the other man was on the other, and as soon we give the signal the crainman lift. But some thing happen, on my mate got kill right then, we send him off by a engin.

#### Living Condition

In those days, we use to pay 3 cent for loaf of bread. one pint of cream 12-13 cent. one blue shirt 40 cent. one working pants \$1.19 up. one quart of salid oil 16¢. Blue~~x~~ black surge \$1.80 per yards up. Dress shirts \$1.10 up.

Wages was very low it range from 10¢ to 20¢ an hour. Hos- pital was free. and ress house, those days we use to get rain most of the time. we goes to in and out in rain and work work through rain, well in 1913 one Sunday morning when the Dike was to brake luse, I was present to see the warter timely passing from Corzal Cut in to May-Flowers, Many of I.C.C. ofical was present then. it was said President Willson was to send it off by tuching a butten. Well on all U.S.A. Curancey is found four words, In God we Trust.

Colonel Gorthell with his staff of workers and with the help of God, has precent to U.S.A. one of the world's greatest aceavement, and that is the Panama Canal. In looking back at those days it was, In God we trust

J. T. MERCHANT

Mitchell S., Alfred; c/o Ronald Chessman, Electrical Dept.,  
Tela Rail Road Company; El Progreso, Yoro, Honduras.

I was brought from Jamaica at the age of 14 years old in the year of 1904, with my mother. I left school in 3 grade or 3 standard. Well, Mother was working and fortunately I got a job as water-boy on the Panama Rail Road docks, and same year Mother took me on the lines, to a place called Bas-Obispo Canal Zone. I worked there carrying water for a drilling gang; then I heard the transportation was employing youngsters for steam-shovel checkers. There when I asked the yard-master at Lascascadas, then he asked me if I could read and write, I told him "a little;" that yard-master was Boreguard, and then J.C. Barnett. Then he gave me a book and Mother bought me a \$1.00 watch. I worked there keeping around and my witts, also. Then the yard-master, JcC. Barnett called me one morning told me "you are going to do some braking on train, you are along with Conductor C. A. Shaw and Engineer W. G. Ford, they will take care of you." So I did as he told me. Well, I kept on being a brakeman for a long time, then he pulled me off the train and put me back in the office. Well, Sirs, I can tell you what I really saw and knew Bas Obispo and Lascascadas. Must really say those two places were the hardest spots, with a steam shovel; digging and meeting up against dynamite caps that were not exploded when the dynamite miners left, causes a lot of lives. Steam shovel pit men, they were called, also steam shovel engineers and crane men Americans Negroes and Spain Spaniards. I don't know how myself and my conductor did not get killed. It was an awful time.

Then I left there and went on working for the Panama R.R. Company. I knew General George W. Goethals and Mr. D. D. Galliard (thats why the name of Culebra Cut was changed to Galliard Cut) Mr. G. W. Goothals would walk on the right hand side of Canal bank from Culebra Cut, stop looking at the works going on below, until he reached a place they called Matachin, there board his motor-car by rail to Culebra, his resident and office. His motorman was an American by the name of Smallwood. Now, Mr. D. D. Galliard, he would walked down the Canal among drills steam shovel dynamite hole looking right down in 30 feet hole where they were loading dynamite. He would go to a steam shovel when it was not working and would ask the steam shovel operator "what's the matter?" The operator would made a reply "We are going to blow these big rocks with dynamites." He would say "good-by, take care of yourself." You should see Mr. Galliard getting out of sight

over rocks, old ties and rails. That's what I see and what happen I was braking on Eng. 211. I saw President Roosevelt and President Taft when they arrive there inspecting the Canal with a special first class coach and observation car, when I was on the Panama Rail Road. I handle Governor McAdors of Texas on special train from Balboa to Cristobal docks, also handle General Pershing of World War I from Cristobal Dock to Gatun Locks, there board a motor boat from Gatun through the Canal to Pedro Miguel and took him to Balboa Railroad Station. I ~~handle~~ handle Princess Mary of Batten-burg, England, her motorcar by rail; she was coming from Colon or Cristobal and her car brake down at a place called Quebrancha Siding. I was on the passenger train when the conductor called me and the rest of the crew to pick the princess at Quebrancha. We stopped, I took my bench from the coach, put on the ground, for the place was to high and she gave me her hand to help ~~xxx~~ on the coach they called Parlor Car.

I have seen the U. S. Battleship Hood, the Renown with Prince Edward going through the Canal and many of ships such as the Grace Line, Lukenbach and the Japanese ships. All that I witness or see.

Life was alright, salary was small, but things were cheap. We did not feel it so hard. Lots of fevers: black water fever, typhoid fever and yellow fever. But Doctor Gorgas try his best by killing out a lot of mosquitoes, fumigating the houses using a lot of oil in the swamps or water that stand still, so as to do away with the malaria. So when the Canal was finish, boats passing through, people going home to their native land, I decided to leave, so I join the United Fruit Company and come on to Honduras, that's where I am making life right now.

ALFRED MITCHELL S.

Moore, John A.; Colon, R.P.

I arrived here 1914 May 6. My first job was with the quarter-master at balboa, next at the dry dock in balbca with Mr. Burns, sec. cattle industry with Mr Johnson. Next with the municipal division, cristoba, coaling station and the cristobal dock until 1949 December.

I am  
Yours truly  
JOHN A. MOORE

1087

Morgan, George W. ; 54 King Street, Spanish Town P.O., Jamaica.

Taken from the Editor Section of the Jamaica Gleaner

The Isthmian Historical Society is trying to collect the personal experience of West Indian who Served in the labour force that dug the Panama Canal. I am one of the Jamaica Negro who served the Panama Canal from 1907 to 1955. Arrived, Colon, Oct 1906. Met by my Uncle Mr. Prince Hunter, old timer, who take care of me untill I got a job on January 1907, As a locomotive fire man at Las Cascadas, C Z. Spent three years at Las Cadas - on the fourth year I was transfered to Balboa, C Z, where I spent years dumping materials to connect Balboa to Flemico. I experience the great Explosion at Bas obisp 1909. I were again Sent to Gamboa Dredging Dept as fire man for Drudge Cascadas from there I retired 1955. Time passes So fast that many of the things I saw during my years Spent in Panama I had forgotten most them. I hope my composition will be of Some use to the Society

Yvam

Yours truly

X.

GEORGE W. MORGAN

DR 7701

Morgan, John; Colon Post Office, Colon, R.P.

... I came here the year 1912, Sept. 2. The first place I work is quarter-master at Mont-Hope name of Mr. Watson. Secondly Gorgona car shop, other places \_\_\_\_\_. Gatun locks with Mr. Bently, and Mr. Parker. I am a carpenter by trade but I never lay up when there is nothing the trade to do, I do but anything to earn a bread. I work with Mr \_\_\_\_\_, Mr. A. Aurther on the F.R. Mr. Andrews, Mr. Wibster, Mr. Faugi, Mr. Smally and J. Ford. I am not getting any pension. I took sick before it start to give out, and up to know I am still sick going 30 years now. I am asking you to see what you can do for me.

I am  
yours truly  
JOHN MORGAN

Moses, Charles; Box 461, Gamboa, C.Z.

I came to Panama for the first time in 1904, on the "Orinoco" from St. Lucia, at the age of 18 years.

My first job was at Culebra Cut, in 1904, receiving dirt that came by the train from the diggins done in the Canal. This dirt was dumped in Summit.

In 1906 I worked at the LA Boca lumberyard packing, assorting etc., the lumber that was destined to the building of houses. In the same year I worked as boatman for the General Manager of the ICC. Later on I worked as drill man behind Corozo.

I also was one of the first to work on the foundation of the Administration Building. On the first day we went to work, one man was killed by a live electric wire.

I worked at Tabernilla with the Engineer Div cutting trachas, then I passed over to the Dredging Division where I worked at Mindi with Capt Dimitre as a sailor and diver.

My last job was with Frank Williams as carpenter. On this job the Gamboa Commissary, Post Office and Police Station were built.

All my experiences which I acquire on the different jobs still live in my memory and I can say they were very happy days.

CHARLES MOSES

Paily, Henry

I came here on the 18 of December 1905, by a Franch boat by the name of Martinique. I start to work in the next day wich was the 19 of said December 1905 on the track line in Rio grande with a forman by the name of Morker cuple months after I went to work with another forman by the name of Englesh on the track line Culebra in the other sid the Canal. In 1907 I went to work with a forman by the name of Joseph on the Culebra Dump. In 1910 I work with the Sanitary Departement in Culebra and Paraiso with forman by the name of Galida and sub forman by the name Charles. During that times I work on the name of Henry Macarie In 1911 I went to work with a forman by the name of Marc Burnes on the pipe line Mecanical Division in Empare. At this times I got marled on my good and real name witsch is Henry Paily, My name was then canges from Henry Macarie to Henry Paily wich is my right name. I continue to work on air compressor in Rio Grande with an Engenier by the name of Homelly In 1915 I was transfered to Balboa Shop working with the seme forman Marc Burnes in Mecanical Division cutting and threading pipe in the pipe machine ontill 1947 I got retirad. This is all times to my pass lif working in the Panama Canal

My respect full to you  
HENRY PAIFY  
D.R. 4099

Parkinson, Constantine; Box 1337, Colon, R.P.

I was born 1894 the 12 of November at a place call Playa de Flor now by the name Fort Sherman this little town was inhabited around french Canal days with mostly Jamaicans and few natives panamaians, around the area was plenty of cocomuts and some other fruits trees such mangoes and pears.

1909 I start to work at sweet water about a mile and half south of Play de Flor as a rear flagman in the survey gang. 1909 work at Toro Point north of Playa de Flor as water boy clearing gang. 1909 work Toro Point survey gang as chainman with Mr. Bertatan and Mr. J. Kitts. 1910 transfer to Mindi cut as chainman foreman survey gang with Mr. J. Kitts. 1912 laid off work finnish Mindi cut, returning back to my home at Playa de Flor. 1913 to part of 1915 laid up for injures.

1909 while working survey gang as rear flagman running trail from Sweet Water thru jungles, rivers and swamp headed to Gatun but only reach as far as Loma Bracho. The idea of the trail was to run a rail road line, so as take rocks from Sosa Hill to be dump around the west breakwater but was cancel as it would interrue the canal traffic.

While working on this trail job I incounter with plenty of snakes and animals one day running down a steep hill my feet got intangle with a snakes coiled up sleeping. I call out for the machet men to kill the snake, and was found to swallow a young deer the snakes was 15 feet long, a next time while standing with my flag pool holding a point for my engeneer Mr. Betartan at a very good distant alone with knee deep in swamp I heard a heavey walking comming behind where I was standing and when I turn to look I notice a large mountain cow headed towards me I took my flag pool and run to engeneer Mr. Betartan and told him a cow was comming to eat me up, he and the machet men went to see and they told me that the cow run and jump into a river. Mr. Beertan seeing that I was so frighten-change me from rear flagman to rear chainman.

1910 while working at Mindi cut and living in Gatun labor camp with rental free in those days and had to use labor train daily for transportation, I notice one day a big slide in gatun cut where the locks was building cover up many workers greeks and

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spaniards that took day and night digging out dead bodys I was told that plenty of these dead bodys had money tied around there waist as in canal days was not so easy to find good place to bank money, it was a very afulfull sight to see how they dig out the bodys but for many of us it did not mean nothing in construction days people get kill and injure almost every day and all the boses want is to get the canal build. I notice one day while as a foreman chainman in Mindi cut some men was loading a hole with danamite it exploud and I see part of men flying in the air what cause the explosion no one knoes but it think like a stick of powder went down with a cap and after pressing by pool cause explosion.

We had was to drink quinine every day so as combat fever and when the rainy season is in it fall far days somtime month working clothes have to be wear for days wet with out changing because no sun to get dried living in Gatun camp was not so bad as janitors keep well clean I get meal ticket from timekeeper for price 27 cents 30 and 40 cents but the 40 cent tickets was mostly for spaniards and greeks as they give wine with meals but so to get wine I always take 40 cents ticket, pleaple was very friendly aldoough you will find it very bad some times I was very luckly with all my boses, and every 4th of July we get free train to ride us up on down and that day many of the workers get kill from drunkness cause hoping off and getting on while train moving.

My Lost story is when I got injured July 1913 the 16 at 5 P.M. while working as brakeman at Toro Piont causeing the lost of my right leg and left heel no clinic at that time, and day of my accident the launch operator was off and only one launch station at Toro Point however the supervisor Mr. Sadiger ask the launch seaman if he could operate, hás answer was he will try and so he did arriving at Colon boat house dock number one where an ambulance driven by horses took me to Colon Hospital by the sea and was operated by doctor Phillip and Bonion, after comming out of the operation in the ward I notice all kinds of cripples around my bed with out arms foot one eye telling me to cheer up not to fret we all good soldiers. I was discharge from hopital November 1913 at that time my family had remove to live at sweet water with just a few scather houses mostley native spanish I was on crutches until 1914 when I got my artificial leg, it was a big day for me returning home as many said that I would not live. I was taken over to my home by a launch and a doctor.

Respectfully yours,  
CONSTANTINE PARKINSON  
DR 8202

Parks, Amos; General Delivery, Colon, R.P.

In the year 1914 I arrived on the Isthmus from Barbados on September 14th living in Colon at the time. There were a lot of West Indians around here and we certainly get along very nice. It took me a little time before I could land a job. My first job was I worked on the track line for John English of Frijoles. He was very nice to me and was very kind and considerate. I worked with him for a period of time. Then my second assignment was at Toro Point - all these time no Panamanians was around much only bare West Indians was going too and fro, from home to work daily. Then on Sunday we all go to church regular. In those days People take Church more serious than today, maybe because in construction days. The amount of West Indians that lose their lives on the job was mournful to talk about. I could remember one instance a boat loaded with about 250 was going through Culebra cut when all of a sudden there was a crash, and many lives were lost, only a few were saved by the mercy of God. Thats why of today when I hear the Spaniards talk that they want the Canal, I ask them on many occasion how many Panamanians ever worked during construction days, and how many lost their lives. None of them could answer. Thats the reason we all use to go to Church more regular than today, because in those days you see today and tomorrow you are a dead man. You had to pray everyday for God to carry you safe, and bring you back. Those days were horrible days to remember. Those wore the times you go to bed at nights and the next day you may be a dead man. There are many more I could tell you, but I just cant recall. On many occasion I have seen truck loaded with men go down to their doom, and many were buried alive by shovels of sand. Construction days will never be forgotten by the West Indian People who gave their lives for the digging of the Canal. Thats why I always say the younger generation of today whose parents lose their lives they should be recompense greatly. My third job was at Colon Hospital where I worked as third cook for a number of years - at that time i was living on the Zone house number 6025 Rainbow City, bachelor quarters. My 4th job was at Mount Hope Albatorr for quite a while. My foreman name was Mr. J. Miller, a very nice man to deal with, after that I worked on the dock as laborer until I retire with 34 years service on May 10th 1953. My foreman name was Mr. Ward. I then return to Colon to live until this present day.

Yours Respectfully,  
AMOS PARKS #5562

Peters, George; Cativa, R.P.; Post Office, Colon, R.P.

I landed in Colon R.P. from the Island of Dominica B.W.I. on the 14th of Dec, 1908 few days after I was employed by one Mr. Crawl in Empire steam shovel repair shop at 10¢ hour. In those days it rain from 6 to 6 you get on the job ringing wet and so you remain till you finished. About 3 months after one Mr. Bates succeeded Mr. Crawl and then I was transfered to one Mr. Safa a (Russian) mechanic trouble shooter for steam shovels in Culabra Cut between Gold Hill and Constructor here we work in two labor train car for the shop. I also have to watch the steam shovels at work, that is for break down when there is a break down they displayed a red flag. Then I notify Mr. Safa he will go on a hand pump car two men will pump him mile a minute, and then the two men will return to me for what ever repair parts they need that has to be done like lightning quick. Condition in the Cut was very bad rain all day and then mud-mud-mud and more mud. Blasting every minute no shelter in the Cut one has to run for a fair distant every once a while some one will get head injuries no steel hats those days. That part I work was near to the slide every once in a while we have to abandon the shop for the 2 cars lyin 45° the tracks will raised to 6' to 10' then all hands with shovel to clear the tracks for the steam shovels to move in you have to be waist deep in. Some time the slide is twice a week. On Sundays I run with the supplies train delivering materals waste soap grease and what every they ordered. Here I work till middle of 1910 and suddenly one morning a letter was handed to me to report to one Mr. Watson Qt master in Cristobal I must catch the first train So I did arrived in Cristobal I handed the letter to Mr. Watson he then told me that I was late and there will not be another Barge untill 2 o'clock then I ask him where I will be going he told me Toro point (Sherman) 2 o'clock I boarded the Barge and she pull out for Mindi there she was loading and never leave till 6 o'clock 8.30 I reach Toro point there were about 30 men on the barge I herd my name called and I aproch and it was Mr. C T Lindsay aset, Quartermasters. Here I work as Store man 37.50 month I supply all the materel for the Brake Water here I work untill 1912. Dec, I resign I was six years as Taxi driver in Colon in 1918 I was reemploy by Mr. Lambert as a chauffer here I work untill the strike in 1920 when the strike was over I got employment with the Electrical division on the 5th of May 1920 with one Mr. Martin supervisor then Mr. Coil, Mr. Metzger, Mr. Smith

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I have serve as district wire man helper under Mr. January, Mr. Jurest, Mr. \_\_\_\_\_, Mr. Lane, John Williams Mr. Van, and last man Mr. \_\_\_\_\_ in all I put 33 years 5 months and some days with the Electrical Division. Retired with good conduct, never was laid off and never was fired. I have four years Construction work with Canal.

Your humble servant  
GEORGE PETERS

Identification Card DR 6148

Phillips, Arthur E.; Estafeta del Chorrillo, Panama, R.F.  
8-140 West 27th St., Room 16, Chorrillo.

I arrived on the Isthmus October 1912. My first job was in Empire Cut as Star Drill helper in November 1912, I worked there about three weeks, then I was transferred to the Black Smith Shop in the same Empire Cut, repairing star drill bit, working there until the completion of that job. After that I got a job in Gorgona Blacksmith shop in the latter part of 1913 when this job was closed I was transferred to Empire Blacksmith shop, Mechanical Division. I worked until the early part of 1914 when I was layed off and I got another job in Balboa Blacksmith shop and worked there until 1950, then was transferred to Cristobal Blacksmith Shop Industrial Area and worked there until August 1958 when I was retired.

**Brief Story** In Empire Cut days it was terrible. One had to work in mud and rain. The American Government had a heavy job on hand with the fighting of mosquitos, fever, cold and building of healthy condition in the whole area. The Health Department daily distributed quinine to the people and flitted the places with some preventative concuction for everyones health.

I recall one workday two brothers by surname, Phillips were sitting under a dump truck train having lunch, after lunch they fell asleep and the engine coupled up and moved, that was the end of their lives.

Living condition was none the best, food stuff was very cheap, for instance, a loaf of bread for 3¢, rice was 12¢ for 4 lbs, yes, the wages was small but cost of living very considerate to all. My foreman, Mr. Webster and I got along well. I also attended regularly the Episcopalean Churches in the various areas of my residence, which was known as the Anglican or Anglo-Catholic church.

Your truly,  
ARTHUR E. PHILLIPS  
D.R. 8540

Plummer, Enrique; Box 169, Panama, R.P.

I was born in Gorgona on August 16th 1889. I started working for the Isthmian Canal Commission (which was later changed to the Panama Canal) in 1905, as a messenger at 7¢ per hour, in an office in Empire for the Central Division. The Canal was divided in three sections, Pacific, Central, and Atlantic division.

When I started to work, Mr. W. D. Bolick was head of affairs. There was only myself and an American in the office then. During the course of business the office was transferred to a big two story building with an office force of about 75 men, divided in different sections, such as Administration, time-keeping, transportation etc.

Mr. Bolick did not stay very long, he went back to the U.S. Col. D. D. Gaillard finally became head of affairs, and Mr. A. E. Bronk who was Chief Clerk was promoted to General Foreman of the Division and Mr. W. I. Beam replaced him.

During the construction men was imported from Jamaica, Barbados, Spain, and some coloured U.S. citizens. The coloured Americans did not stay very long however, they were shipped back home because they were making trouble. In those days there were no motor vehicles, all we had was horses and mules. The majority of them was employed as team drivers, and when delivering goods would refuse to unload same, claiming they were no labourers, they were team drivers. They also were tutoring the other employes to act accordingly. In view of the fact, they were sent back home.

The Spaniards were given special meals, such as a bean call Galbansas and wine etc.

Sanitation in those days were terrible, some of the U.S. citizens got sick with yellow fever, and some of them died. Col. Gorgas took charge of the Sanitary Division, and finally cleaned up things. The system used was to have men go from house to house sealing up all seams with paste and paper, place a pot of sulphur in each house, light it and leave it to burn killing anything alive. Before doing so the people had to take out all

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their clothes ect. to avoid them getting discoloured. Then he would have men go through all the swampy land, digging drains to which they would hang cans of mosquito oil dripping and spreading all through the area.

Its the opinion of the majority that the french had abandoned the canal entirely, it is'nt so, they were still doing a little work although they would never finish at the rate they were going, They would line up a string of cars near the bank, and men would go and fill them with picks and shovels. After they are filled and the men given credit for their work the cars would be pulled out and another set replaced.

Inasmuch as the U.S. figgered on a lock and dam canal, the americans did not have to do very much digging, as the ditch were pretty deep when they took over, for which they used steam shovels, dirt trains, danimite etc.

There was quite a lot of people killed by accidents of different kinds, but more so of danimite going off ahead of time. Sometimes dozens of men were blown up in the air, impossible to know what arm or leg or head belonged to what body. Bothe the injured and the dead were loaded on cars and taken to Ancon Hospital (the majority labourers).

During the constrocton, (I emagin) the french dug through a big hill, leaving two hills on each side. The hill on the east side were called Gold Hill and the hill on the west were called Contractors Hill. Gold Hill gave the americons quite a boxing lesson, it was always sliding and blocking the ditch. After doing everything possible encluding driving piles which was to no avail, they called a meating of all the officials to give their idias of how to overcome same. Somebody sogested that they install big water hose on the opposite side of the hill, keep pumping water continually on same which would lousing yp the dirt on that side eventually causing the weight to overhang on the opposite side of the canal. That did the job.

The locks were build by a contracting firm name The macklin-tic Marshal Co. If they did not luse money doing it, I am sure they did not make all they should, because I know their time-keepers carried a lot of men to whom they would issue metal checks who would only come around on pay days to collect without working. One of the boys who worked with me as messenger quit his job and went to work for them as timekeeper to do likewise.

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Although I was a silver roll employee, I had some of the most responsible jobs in our office. I was file clerk (I kept the records of forty-four \_\_\_\_\_ and silver employees, My immediate boss kept the record of the gold employees). I was mail clerk (I mailed all letters, copy of letters, reports, etc. to their destination) I was property clerk (I was responsible for all the property around the office) I was stationary clerk (I had to order and maintain a supply of stationary to supply both our office and the outside) and also in charge of messengers (I had seven boys who assisted me in performing my duties.

Mr. Staley, my immediate boss and the only man who knew the combination of the vault that kept all our file cases, had the habit of playing head and tail in same (gambling) He opens the vault in the morning, and I who uses it last close it in the evening. One day unknown to me, they were in there playing. After getting out the mail I closed the outer door and throw off the combination. They did not make an immediate alarm, thinking I was having a joke on them. After I got home, the watchman came running out of breath to let me know there was someone in the vault. I rushed up, and luckily the inner steel door was not closed (which is about three feet apart from the outer door). The result, he was able to stay in the inside and tell me how to open same. Imagine the fright we both had.

There were a Mr. Hobbs of the transportation section. As file clerk any letter referring to an individual, the chief clerk would mark on it PP (meaning personal papers) which a messenger would bring to me and I get same and send it to him. One day a letter of the kind came to me, but Mr. Hobbs had the papers wanted. The boy went to Mr. Hobbs for same and was told Mr. Bronk had already gotten same. Later Mr. Bronk called again for the papers and the boy told him what Mr. Hobbs said, Mr. Bronk told him to tell Mr. Hobbs he was a god dam liar. Not wanting to use the exact words, the boy went back for the papers. In return Mr. Hobbs said something disrespectful to him who in turn told him the exact words Mr. Bronk said, He raised his hand to strike the boy, who ducked and came up with him by the legs, he over balanced, knocked down my typewriter and caused quite an uproar. Men came running from the different sections to the fight. Mr. Bronk who is very strict, sat at his desk watching all that was going on. After all eyes turned and saw him, they all walked away. Mr. Bronk then came to my section, and before.

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saying anything, Mr. Hobbs told him that nigger called me a god dam lier and I slapped him. Without answering, Mr. Bronk turned to me and said Plummer I want a written statement of what happened around here, and to Mr. Staley he said the same thing. The result, Mr. Hobbs was suspended for a couple of days.

Being risponsable for all property around the office, I was accosationally Checked up to see if all was well. On one such occasion I was short a typewriter. there was a Judge Garrison a nabour of mine. Having nothing to do at nights, he would come over and kill time with us. I said nothing to anyone in the office of my shortige. That night I told the Judge of my troubles, and the next day he sent a dective to me to investigate. Mr. Hobbs seeing the dic. talking to me, after he left came to find out whats it all about. After telling him, he said you little darn fool, why dindt you say something about it. I botrowed the typewriter and have it at home. The result: another suspencion for Mr. Hobbs.

About ten to fifteen years ago, I read something about the oldtimers in the daily papers. I had a picture of the whole office fource, and one of the head of affairs which I sent to the official fotographer of the administration building.

I also read in the papers sometime ago that some graves were discovered somewhere around Paraiso on the opposit side of the canal. I can inform you that after the war with Panama and Colombia, there were an epedemic of small pox, the french had some buildings abandaned in that nabourwood where the sick was iso- lated. and I imagine they burried the deads around there. Hence the graves discovoured.

...

When the canal was finished, the Central division was abol- ished, leaving a Mr. Greenslade as general foreman to finish up little things to be done. myself and a Mr. Fotter was left to take care of the office, which was transfored to the administra- tion building in Culebra, and was called the fourth Div.

During the construction they had men going through the canal feeding all the employes with Quinine.

About Col. Gaillard, he was quite a gentleman. He never.

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spoke to a lady with his hat on. He acted at times however as though he was a little off in the head. I read in the papers some time ago that he finally died in an asylum. Once there was a dirt train conductor recently transferred from the Pacific Div. to the Central div. Col. Gaillard who issued orders that no one ride on a dirt train without a pass, one day got on his train. To be mean (I think) the Conductor asked him for his pass, after telling him who he was, he looked him over and said you Col. Gaillard? a little son of a b came on my train a week ago and said he was Col. Gaillard, Now you say you are Col. Gaillard. I'll be darn if I don't take a day off and find out who in hell is Col. Gaillard. In the meanwhile you get the hell off my train. He did take a day off to find out who was Col. Gaillard, and was suspended. But he appealed and won.

In those days there was no kind of recreation, the married couples would have weekly parties, and the bachelors would kill time gambling. After a while they would start playing base ball, and it finally got to the stage that they would import ball players from the U.S. and give them jobs so as to have them to play ball. Then they started friendly organization, and I made some extra money printing circulars.

After all was finished, the fourth division was closed, and I was transferred to the Quartermaster's office which was taking stock in the different store houses, and my job was to make copies of the different articles and sizes on a typewriter. On the same day I went to the chief clerk and told him I could not do the job, it needed a regular steno-grapher who could read and write at the same time. He told me if he was satisfied he saw no reason why I was not. The third day, tired of sitting, I got up to stretch my legs, and was talking to the timekeeper who I knew, while doing so, I noticed my name on the pay roll for forty dollars. I called his attention to it, telling him my rate was sixty dollars. He said that's what he was told to pay me. I went to the chief clerk and told him I was entitled to sixty dollars, inasmuch as I was transferred. He informed me that he had no job for me at present, but wanted to hold me until he could find one, and all the present job could pay was forty dollars. I thank him and told him I was reduced from seventy-five to forty when the central division was closed, and now to be reduced again was more than I could take. I went to the timekeeper and found out that I had enough for a five dollar commissary book which I got and said goodby to the Panama Canal.

Prescod, John F.; (DR4833); House 11, Room 10; 12 Street;  
Rio Abajo P.O., P.P.

I came from Barbados B.W.I. June 1906 on a boat call the Solon. They put me off at Tabernilla Go to work on the dump at 10¢ per hour The boss name Mr. Culter.

1907 was in Obispo cut working at the steam shovel in mud and water One pair boot last me one day In the afternoon walk to the camp bear foot At Obispo boss name Mr. Billing.

1908 work in the drilling gang in Empire cut as drill runner at 10 cent per hour I work in Lascascadas cut Culebra cut Boss name Mr. Whitehead Plenty malaria fever Drink plenty wine tonic Work in all the cut from 1906 to 1914. Drill in Obispo cut Boss say take machine out lay them down side the track line Canal finish October month 1908 to of the worst accidents of the construction period five men were killed eight injured when a tooth of a shovel working in the cut near Empire struck the cap of an unexploded charge of dynamite. Two days later lightning was blamed for setting off blast in some of the 154 hole which had been packed with dynamite ready for blasting near Mindi, seven men wer killed 10 others hurt, and one was missing as the result of this explosion

Big boss Mr. Hagon say who the hell tell you to put that machine up there take it down Canal his finish. I say what the hell I am going to do now no money only the pay check that coming now one man in the gang eating flour dumplin drop out of his mouth what sir! the canal finish I have no money.

On October 22-1913 Cucaracha slide on the east side of the cut began what the Canal Record decribed as the most rapid movement of a large mass of earth that has yet been experienced in the excavation of Culebra cut.

The toe of the slide advanced 75 feet in 40 minutes, carrying away all four of the construction tracts on the east side of the cut, thus immobilizing 16 Lidgerwood flatcar two locomotives and two steam shovel

At 7:10 AM on August 15, 1914 the S.S. Ancon slipped from its berth Pier 9 in Cristobal to begin the Canal transit. Aboard the ship were some 200 guest including the President of Panama and quantity of cargo for dispatch at Balboa

Nine hours and 40 minutes later the Ancon had reached the end of the channel at Balboa and the Panama Canal was officially open to world commerce.

May 1913 was drilling Empire cut in a difficult place has to tie rope around my waist for saftety. Nother gang near

Prescod, J/ F. - p.2

Culebra cut was drilling 3 hour. Could not set up one machine due to rock falling down on them. General foremen came to spot say your all dont started up yet no boss rock falling down un us.

Say if I go up and set up a drill God dam it I going to fire the whole bunch of you I am sorry to say sad accidents occure that wa in May 1913 Rock fall from the bank knock Mr. Swinehart down in the canal Put him on a flatcar rush him to Ancon Hospital die the same day.

Malaria fever have me so bad I has to drink plenty of quine tonic tell I heard singing in my ears murder murder going to quits drinking quine was geting me deaf.

March 1907 a slid at Culebra carried away a few houses, a shop, and the old Washington House. The first death sentence pronouced by American officials was passed on Adolphus Coulson, a West Indian convicted of poisoning his wife.

Living in camp the men dont like it At 7:00 AM the watchman at the camp say the sick and lame outside some men take to the bush build ~~zhz~~ shanty out dynamite boxes.

One of men leave the camp go the bush in Mandinga to sleep 12 o'clock midnight Floice knock at the roon door open the door go in you married no come one put yer shose un to to jail in the morning court house at Empire judge say you married no sir 12 midnight too late to go sir I live in the camp judge say dont say camp say quarters I go for my pot The court laught too late for that. \$10 and the woman \$10.00.

I give credit to the American go to war in Culebra out go to war with the malara fever yellow fever and the mosquit and bad water Man walk the cut to give us quinie tonic to drink every day.

June 1906 Uolon was filthy the street nothing but mud. Bogle go down to axis in mud. Thanking you for your consideration Excuse the writing please my hand dance around.

JOHN PRESCOD

Richards, John Altyman; Box 1781, Panama, R.P.

Many years ago while still yet a young man in Jamaica I was intrigued by the Canal Construction done in this beautiful tropical country. I discussed the possibilities of working in a different country and of learning a strange language with my relatives; as soon as permission was granted I partook for Panama in 1914.

Still quiet and a green young man bursting with energy I arrived in Panama and while unable to get a position in the actual building or construction of the Canal I started on March 9, 1914 to work on the baseball diamond in Pedro Miguel as a laborer--leveling off the diamond. The foreman was Mr. Loman and General Foreman Mr. Boyd, while doing this job for one year I met various men from other countries and we swapped many ideas and interesting stories among each other thus making working conditions rather enjoyable to a certain extent.

My next job on this Isthmus was with Mr. Chedwick in the Quartermaster Department for one year, as a janitor.

I next saw an opportunity for a better position as a soda fountain attendant in the Pedro Miguel Clubhouse and worked there from 1916 to 1917. There I had the honor of serving the Executive Secretary at that time. The manager there was Mr. Tom Booz.

My next transfer was to the Paraiso Clubhouse where I put in 18 faithful years of service under a rather pleasant boss, Mr. Walla until 1936. While working and living as a bachelor and then as a family man there I had the joy of when many times my neighbors came to the clubhouse many would wait patiently until I had gotten around to them.

I then got a next job in a fairly new community, La Boca. In 1942 I worked as a soda fountain attendant for a few years and enjoyed the change and the chance to make new friends, listen to their troubles and give some advice at times.

Seeing an opportunity to make a better provision for my ever growing family I went and worked for the Mechanical Division for two straight years. After that time I got reduction of force

Richards, J. A. - p.2

for three months. Having a family to look after I looked high and low for work not caring how humble it was just so we won't starve.

I prayed day and night along with my family to get something to do and my prayers were answered when Mr. E. C. Lombard sent me to work in the Pacific Clubhouse. I first worked as a janitor, then I moved up to a soda fountain attendant; while there I got the opportunity to serve different local politicians at that time. Many I knew just from pictures and there I was able to meet them personally and at times say a few words with them.

Mr. Callender, the manager, then gave me a chance to work as a billiard room attendant. This was my last job which I held while in the Pacific Clubhouse after working there for three years. In this job I came into contact with many youngsters and although they many times tried hard to outsmart me in many ways my last few years of working in the Pan Canal ended rather pleasantly.

no signature

Riley, T. H.; Apartado 1427, Colon, R.P.

I arrived in Panama on or about the 25th day of August in the year 1909. I was employed by the Commissary Division at Culebra C.Z. on the 4th of September the same year, as a delivery man, as far as I can remember. I was assigned to making deliveries of food stuffs to the American employees living in that area, including Col. Goethals, Gailliard, Hodges, Admiral Rosseau and others like Dr. Crabtree, the Goldmarks, etc. There were several men employed for the purpose of soliciting orders from the families living there. The items ordered and paid for were parcelled and tagged for delivery to the parties concerned, and had to be made within 24 hours wether it rain or shine. In those days there were no such things as Auto-trucks or the like hence those things had to be delivered by means of a wagon and a couple of mules. Culebra was not by far a level Section, and it was necessary to push the wagon helping the mules on many ocassions.

The years went by and going through Culebra, deep cracks, here and there were noticeable. I can remember one of the boys remarked "See those Cracks?" they are indications that all here will be deep water. The cracks were so far from the Cut itself that he was told, Man if the Colonel should hear you say that you will be arrested. The digging of Culebra out continued and it happened that houses around the same area had to be pulled back due to slides. I can remember house no 122 or 123 was pulled back some distanced with the families intact. It is a sure guess that those Cracks are now in the Canal due to slides. Speaking of slides, Culebra is the Section subjected to it. On the fourth of July in the Year 1913 or there-about, there was a big slide in the Cut not far from Gold Hill, so called in those days, and I witnessed a Steam shovel completely covered except for the tip of the handle of the bucket. This was a fortunate incident as it happened on the fourth of July when no one was at work on that day.

There were many fine American Citizens living in Culebra among them were as far as I can remember, The Bevingtons, Trasdorfs, Ramseys, Cornellys, Higgins, Meehans, Littles, and many others. Gold Hill at one time looked as if it would just top-ple over and block the Canal, however it was not so as every-

thing was done to prevent that. I witnessed water pouring down by means of large hose washing away loose earth that may have caused serious slides. This water pouring continued for some time, but the slides continued none the less. Coming to the end of the natural digging of Culebra Cut, a portion of earth remained between Gold Hill and Cacaracha, in the center of the Cut. It was thought that in letting in the water that portion of earth would be washed away by the force of the water, but it was not so. The Day came when the Dykes were broken and the water poured through the Canal, and with the excitement of every one the water remained divided when it reached Culebra, where this portion of earth formed an island. Col. Gailliard must have been very much upset at this point, and the dredging of this part of the Canal went into full force. Barges upon Barges loaded with rocks and dirt were daily seen to and fro through Culebra Cut. Speaking of Bridges, there was a temporary bridge across the Canal between Culebra and Empire, but transportation was not on a large scale as far as I remember.

The building of the locks was one of the most important project in the Canal construction, this was done by the McClentio Marshall Company. Men working these locks received better pay than the average laborers in those days, but were faced with many accidents specially operating those Electric drills. From time to time men were seen returning home earlier from work than usual due to the fact, some one fell from the scaffold which resulted in death, and in such cases work would be suspended for the balance of that day to show respect to a fellow worker. The family of those men working on those locks were always fearful as to who may be next to fall.

The digging of the Panama Canal is a wonderful accomplishment, when taken into consideration the many phases of operation; a railroad track had to be laid for the steam-locomotive with at least four or five dumpcars attached. The steam-shovel keeps digging up dirt and rocks filling those cars one by one while the train moves along gradually placing each car in range with the shovel to be filled, when all have been filled the train pulls out to places designated for the dumping of these materials. The next train follows to be filled in like manner day by day. The shoveling of these rocks and dirt was not always easy, for those powerful shovels, hence it was necessary

Riley, T. H. - p.3

to use dynamite blast to soften up rocks and solid earth. Gangs of men were employed with electric star drills boring holes in rocks and solid earth in preparation for the dynamite blast this continued until the desired depth of the Canal was attained. The men working in the powder gang suffered many casualties.

The digging and opening of the Panama Canal was not all to be accomplished, there were jungles converted into good residential areas by dumping, and good sanitation throughout the entire Canal Zone from Colon to Panama. The Break-water at the Cristobal harbor entrance is a visable feat in the Canal construction, and was built no doubt from rocks and other materials dug from the Canal. There were changes in the running of the trains from Panama to Colon and vise-versa, Culebra, Empire and Lascascadas were actually isolated from the main line hence it was necessary to inaugurate a shuttle service between Fedro Miguel and Paraiso. The train leaving Panama for Lascascadas had to await the train leaving Colon for Panama for the transfer of passengers or other materials destined to these Section in question. These transfers were made possible by means of a swinging bridge at Paraiso, this Bridge swings open for the passing of ships and closes for the passing of the trains. This alone is a job well done.

The Panama Canal was officially open on August 15th 1914 with the S.S. Ancon as the first ship to transit the Canal from the Atlantic to the Pacific Ocean.

In closing, I join with all of Panama with the chorus of God Bless America for the God-inspired ability in building the Panama Canal, and making Panama such a healthy place to live in.

Respectfully submitted,  
T. H. RILEY  
D.R. 6294

Robinson, Samuel A.; Colon Post Office, Colon, R.P.

I comencing to work here in the construction of this Panama Canal since the year 1904 when it was title as ICC. My first job was water tender, up the Gol hill cut and true the other years true all the epdemeck Black feaver malaria feaver mud & rain up to the complestion when water was let into the Canal I also work for the P.R.R antill I was retyred in 1952. Streate service no reduction in force. My Bosses whom names I can remember, heare I will mention Mr. Omer, Mr. Terrie, Mr. Gelean, Mr. Rasom, Mr. Shiegley, Mr. Ceneade, Mr. Seaschen on mney others in the P.R.R Mr. Beard, Mr. Blunt Mr. Shefer, Mr. Burgens, Mr. Heel, Mr. Foster, Mr. Molon, Mr. Woods, Mr. Stone & mney others name that I can remember at this present time of writing Deare competion Editor of the 1sthmian Historical Society, I remain yours truley.

SAMUEL A ROBINSON

Rodrigues, Nicolas; Escobal, R.P.

Quiero informarle algo sobre de que me Solisitan en su notita que recibí Si no me esquivoco es Porque en ese tiempo estoy muy Nino, pero si me recuerdo que comense a trabajar como aguatero en la construccion del Canal como en el ano 1912 algo asi, No me Secuerdo muy bien los nombres de los Primaros Jefe que tuve, Tambien me recuerdo que por el ano 1912 o el 1913 trabaje en el departamentos de ingeniero con el Principal Jefe que se llamaba o se llama Mr Worberis me recuerdo que en la construccion de las trochas del Canal tambien trabaje con un Jefe que se llamaba Mister Jandro acampamentado por las Montanas, tambien me recuerdo en las construccion de trincheras con un Jefe que se llamaba Mister Fitar tambien me recuerdo que trebaje en el Canal con un Jefe que llamaba Mister Bocha No estoy seguro en que ano pero fue en la construccion del Canal, tambien que trabaje en el Departamentos de la Ray Pal con un Jefe que se llamaba Mister Canalí tambien me recuerdo que tuve otras Jefe en la Panama Ray Pal se llamaba Mister Andajudi, tambien me recuerdo si no me esquivoco trabaje con un Jefe en las exohesas de Pedro Miguel ese Jefe se llamaba Mister Sam tambien trabaje como Brequero de trenes de tierras del Canal pero no puedo recordarme el nombres de los Jefes de ese tiempo pero tambien trabaje en el Canal con un Jefe que se llamaba Mister Brail; Varios Jefe que tuve mas pero no puedo recardarme el nombres de ellos, pero eso fue como por el ano 1911 o hasta ahora por el ano 1929 que trabaje en la Compania de Alas Juela con un Jefe que se llamaba Mister Yaimar tambien trabaje con un Jefe en la mismo companias que se llamaba Mister Bosman hasta la fecha que fue donde perdi mi mano esto es lo que you puedo informales porque los demas no me acuerdo los nombres ni las fechaes ni mes si no me equivocc esto es todo que puedo informarles

NICCLAS RODRIGUES

Sin mas que decirles  
Soy su atento y Seguro Servidor

Rouse, Joseph; no address given, postmarked Balboa.

I landed here on the Isthmus in the year 1905. I cannot remember the month I was put off at the section which was called Gorgonia where I was camped and fed. The next day I was presented with a pick and shovel to work on the track line of the Mechanical Division where the locomotive run. I was turned over to a old Jamaican man by the name of Charles Campbell as my boss. I worked as a laborer for about one month. I became so skillful that I was presented with 21 working men and a water boy by the Walking Foreman, Mr. Little. The General Foreman was Mr. Elleck and our Master Mechanic was Mr. Cummings. After the track lines were built, the machine shop was built then the can shop. I yet remained as foreman for the car shop for many years then the shop removed to Empire, I remained as foreman.

I will now bring to your remembrance of the time the Pay Car ran off the track. I cannot remember the year nor month, but I remember I was called by my General Foreman Mr. Herman and my foreman Mr. Taite to seek the trouble. I did so with three men. We went off at the call on a trolley. The trouble was a bad wooden shim and it only took us a few hours. The Pay Car was able to pay off that same day.

The shop then removed to Balboa (the same Mechanical Division) and I yet remained as foreman. After such time I was promoted to a clerk. These were the people I worked for: Mr. Alexander Greig, Foreman, Shipwright and Dock Master; Mr. George F. McDade, succeeding Dock Master; Mr. McMahon, Foreman of Planing Mill and Mr. Swanson, Foreman of Planing Mill and Shipwright.

In the early days of construction of the Isthmian Canal, the wages were small yet we could live better than these days. Things were cheaper I would say 100%. The wages were 10¢ per hour, then as the years rolled on the wages went higher. In those days we were fed on the job with quinine to keep away the fever. When the big dike was blownd in 1913, those who were yet alive praised The Almighty God that he had enabled us to see the water flowing and that he had given men the knowledge which enabled the completion of hard toiling night and day. As far as I can remember, these are the sections: Colon, Gatun, Frijoles, Monte Lear, Mindi, Gorgonia, Empire, Balboa, Panama.

I have been retired in the year 1950, after working 45 years

Rouse, J. - p.2

for the Mechanical Division and during the World War 2, I worked from Sunday to Sunday as a monthly employe with no relief.

Respectfully Yours  
signature typed  
DR 4256

Ruiz, Obdulio; 4th St., Amador Guerrero Ave., House #3026,  
Room 20, Colon, R.P.

I arrived in Panama in 1910, I went to Pedro Miguel and started to work as a laborer (pick and shovel) with one Mr. Walker; from 6:30 a.m. to 5:30 P.M. I lived in the I.C.C. camp, about 150 men, slept in a canvas bunk, at times I passed a good night, and other nights the laborers kept useless noise playing cards, etc. etc.

I worked very hard, and my salary was only 13 cents per hour, there was a kitchen close by where I took my meals, the food was fairly good and clean, and I always had a belly-full. The laborers in general were all well-behaved; of course on account of the strict laws and constant vigilance of the police officers.

A year later I was transferred to Miraflores as a carpenter helper; I had an accident whilst working, a piece of steel fell on my big toe, and was sent to Ancon Hospital, there I remained three months; thanks to the food and kind help of the American doctors.

I then returned to Pedro Miguel, and the boss sent me to a material bodega to work on account of my sickness.

There was plenty of rain in those days, at times I worked with wet clothes, malaria fever was very common, and several laborers died; the doctors gave me liquid quinine about three times a week to stop the fever. In general, I have to thank the American Government, for I had a clean place to sleep, fairly good food; and a good hospital to rest when sick and kind and competent doctors to deal with at all times.

The above-written are my experiences and working and living condition during those days.

Respectfully yours,  
OBDULIO RUIZ

Sailsman, Philip Millerd; Gamboa Post Office, C.Z.

I came to Panama on the third of May 1910 I work on the Isthmus during Canal construction for the Engineering Division at Gatun.

Living and working condition wasent so good. I work on the Dock loading an unloading Ships. I work for the drudgeing division on drudge No 86, an for the Solidres at Franksfield then for the Sanitary Gang no 47. Termination August 27, 1928 to go in Farming on a land License. In 1945 I bought war bond to help subdue the enemies. I am a Jamaican Born October 24, 1891. Their is not one Administration of the Laws of men has one dot of guilt against the life I live. My greatest delight in life is honesty to Jehovah God Him who is the Author of life and the maker of light. Truth is the only road that lead to the Blessing of Almighty God.

unsigned

St. John, Clifford; Bldg. 9084, 10th St., Room No. 5B, Colon,  
R.P.

I am a native of Barbados. I arrived in the Isthmus on the 7th August, 1905, at the age of 17 years. First place of residence was Rio Grande. I came to the Isthmus on contract, and did a variety of work, including work with a Steam Shovel gang, using a Pioneer Shovel, at a place which existed then, known as Gold Hill,

While working at Gold Hill, I got my foot injured from a rock falling from the hill, as a result of which was sent to a Rest Home, which was the customary procedure in those days. The injury did not improve duly, and I was sent to Ancon Hospital. While in the hospital one of the nurses was instrumental in securing work for me there (having got the sanction of Dr. Herrick). There I worked for approximately two years.

The next job was with the Panama Railroad Company, running telephone wires from Panama to Colon. This job I held for approximately three years. At that time I lived in box cars along the line. These cars kept moving from one location to another. While working at Worme Grande I contracted Typhoid Fever. As a result I was hospitalized for a period of about a month in Colon Hospital. After being discharged from the hospital I did not return to the same job, instead I got a job with the Panama Railroad as a Watchman. My duty was to watch a barge which had been loaded with barley. I developed Black Water Fever by drinking the water on the barge. I was again sent to Colon Hospital and was confined there for two months.

Upon my discharge from the hospital I lived at Camp Beirn and worked as a Longshoreman at the Cristobal docks.

I later got a job in Gatun for the Isthmian Canal Commission (I.C.C.) between 1907 to 1910, as a File Driver, driving Trussels from Gatun East Bank to the Spillway across the Chagres River. This job was completed in 1910.

During that year I got a job with McClinkett-Marshall, running a Reamer for boring holes into gates to put rivets. This

St. John, C. - p.2

job lasted for about four months. While working with this outfit I saw a man fall 85 feet to his death. The same could have happened to me but I was saved when someone held me back. I several short-term jobs thereafter, including work in Fortobelo on a Steam Shovel, between 1909 and 1910.

My last job was with the Dredging Division, Surveyor Gang, from 1910 until my retirement in 1954.

no signature

Sanchez, Silvero; Ave. A 10-B, Estrada, Panama, R.P.

I Mr Silvero Sanchez came to Panama in the year 1908, started to work as a waterboy from 1908 to 1909, return to the same division in 1910, I was transfer to Mandinga wrby for the sam micipal Divison, I had reach the age of manhood, we were building the prison for the prisoners in Mandinga after we had finish this job I started to work with the Eng. Divison as a level man until the job was finsh all of the labors and their family left the lines for Fanama City to live. In the year 1913 I started to work for the I.C.C running pipelines from Gamboa to Miraflores one of my gran experiences I had is when we had to dump cement in the Bucket fro mixing and the crane come and take the cement to small \_\_\_\_\_ and ther dump the cement in the pillars for the Miraflores looks if we did not take good caution many of us could lose our life, the people in those day were polite and friendly, also the living condition was very good. We all live in the camp. I also work for the army in 1913 when they were fortify Flamenco Island, I also work for the survey section for about 3 months return to the army fortify the Flamenco Island in Toro point, Colon, Sir this is what I could recall at this moment hoping for your reply.

Yours truly  
SILVERO SANCHEZ

Simmons, Edgar Llewellyn; Residence Bldg. #34, Rio Abajo;  
Post Office Estafeta Parque Lefebvre.

Unto whom this may concern in the Isthmian Historical Society. The below signature here by do highly appreciate and praise the sponsors of such a great competition in order to find out the limited time and work, or work places, and the sort of work, and where first began.

It was 1908. Yes sir, on the 26 day of the afore mentioned year we steam out of the little harbour called the Carlisle Bay at Barbadoes. It was on the Royal Mail boats called the Magdalena on which we made the trip. We made about three stoppage, if memory affords me rightly. One at Saffornilla, La Guira, and Cartagena. After a few more days and nights, we finally reach our destination Colon. It was about 4:30 to five o'clock when we docked. They huddle us up in box cars, I think it was. Well, about an hour and a half had elapse. When an engine bearing I.C.C. No. 614 couple on to us, and we were on our way. I remember passing a few seccions of which a little one was call Lion-Hill. As we rolled along the train came to almost a dead stop, slowly moving along, to which I heard after that it was a place called Black Swamp and the train ha s to slow down. From there we came to little place called Ahorca Lagarto, a Spanish name. Then to Bohio, and Friojoles, then Tabernilla, of which I think they drop off some emmagrents. Then comes the next and final one for me (San Pablo) The evening of the first day of June 1908. It was just about 6 to 6:30 in the evening, when we were greeted with quite a fow white friends which had a few colored boys, jaunitors and watch men. We departed for the East side of San Pablo where our difficulties began. It was to cross over a little swing bridge over the Chagres River. We were scare to death, couldn't make it until the same watchmen and jaunitors came and release us of our grips and bags and shew us how to walk on the bridge. At any rate, we got over trembling of fear, because the little bridge was swining from side to side. So, you can judge for yourselves what it was like, i.e., if any of the white folks are yet alive who remember the little extension cable bridge across the Chagres River. So, after being told of the hour to turn out the following day, we took to camp. Morning came, and at six we got ready. Just a while after a whistle blew, we turn out only to meet some white faces again. This time they had time books, pads, and brass checks, and also meal tickets, ect. etc. We were lined up in two long lines clad to the best of our ability. They began to pick every other until they had about

12 or 15 men, handing them picks and shovels, so, off they went. I did not see them again until evening. The same thing went on picking every other. By this time, another man came, not a white man, one of our own West Indian fellow men came smiling, looking me in the face, I now believing I would fair off better than with pick and shovel, follow me, he said, about 9 or 11 of us left, to my surprised I was given a spade and to a Western dump car we went. It was loaded with coal, he made us put the coal on one side, then knocked off a ring around a link of chain, and not aware of what would happen, suddenly I was up to my knees in coal. Pulling my feet out, we began clearing the track to push the car out. We finally got through. After that, I think we went on to load up a steam shovel; about 11 or 12 oclock we took lunch, and one oclock we turn back with the same wood and coal to which we made our first day. Next day, we were off laying down ties for track line. We completed another day. By this time, my friends had heard that I was at San Pablo. They came for me and by seven oclock that evening I was in Tabernilla. My friends took me to their Bosse's. One called Bungo, and the other one Watson, colored men, they were. But Mr. Bungo, I stood with him for some time. Finally I decide to look for my father, who was here from 1906. I had heard he were at the West Indian Barracks. It was right where the Corunda Hospital was; for two day I did not find him. I steal into the camp the first night and slept until next morning, I was off again, finally I met a friend and he told me he were over in 21 Street Central. I found him, so, after resting up a little, my father got a water boy job for me, just where the Corunda Laundry are now, on a dump call Tivoli dump, from which I was transfered to a gang called the floating gang which used to cut drains to lead off water settling around the sections. We reach as far as Pedro Miguel and was laid off, this was some part of 1909. Not doing anything I went to Mayflowers. The morning when the tunnel fell in, I was stopping at a cousin, Julian Phillips, right under the bank. I went up and had a look. They said only one man was missing. Well, about a week or so after, I decided to return to Tabernilla. I took the train labour at Mayflowers and got off at Paraiso, where I began walking down through the Cut until I had reach Madachin, where I began the tract line walk. I finally reach Tabernilla around 2 oclock. I put up in Camp until next morning from which I went to the little yard-office ran by Medcalfe, while Mr. George Wagner, Silver and Mr. Herman were tract foremans under Greenslades, as Chief of Section, if I remember rightly. So, Mr. Silver pick me this

time. We were divided up, Barbadian Jamaicans, and Frenchmen, while on the other side we had Greeks, Italians, and Spaniards, but we work in harmony although we did not understand each other. This was in 1909. Sometimes I am on 202 Engine and LedgerWood throwing aprons, when the plough pull it off on the dump. Sometimes I am on 229, other time on 254 doing the same work, while Engine 244 pulls the spreader and spreads the dirt, which are unloaded from flatcars, which are composed of about 15 flatcar. Then, in 1910, January I decided to go to Gatun where they had began the Spill-way job. They took on 3 shifts of brake-men, fire-men and engineers, as they were called. I got on with a man name Farewell, a fireman, myself and another brakeman name Huddren Moss. To which I acted as brakeman and conductor. Spotting my own train under the shovel steam load it, and then take it out the dump, our train was composed of 4 small Western dump car. Come back, wait in the clare for orders. All this under supervision of Mr. Keatar and Hughes, if I remember the latter man rightly. The-shifts were split up again, and some were layed off. Mr. Keater put me with Mr. John Hannah as switch tender up the west wing wall, where they were dump up the back fill. There was a man called Tolia operates a derrick there which lifts the concrete buckets from flatcars drawn by small engines, from the mixture. These small engines are couple to two little flatcars, each car a bucket. My work here is to look out for trains, the derrick, and the concrete engines. I has 3 flags, green, yellow and red. I keep my eyes on the Tower. If a green flag are sticking out of the window, Ill give Mr. Tobey my red flag. If any obstruction that may not be clared in ten or 15 minutes, Ill wave my red flag to the Tower to hold the train. When all are clared I give the Tower my green flag to proceed on. Well after working around for some time, I went and got a job in the powder gang at Gatun, where all those hugh trees were blown up with dynamite that I succeeded a job. After blowing up the trees, we had axe men to cut holes in each tree. Some trees has up to 15 holes or more. After the holes are cut, two or 3 sticks of dynamite are place in the holes, with a cap and coil, about 18 inches long, and covered with mud. So all are set for evening. After the 5:15 passenger train pass for Panama, we start lighting. Some of us has up to 65 or 72 holes to light and find our way out. So, to you the Sponsors of the Isthmian Historical Society, you can judge the situation, when 9 of us start out, each one with two sticks of fire in our hand, running and lighting, at the same time trying to clair ourselves before the first set begin bursting on us. Then its like Hell. Excuse me of this assertion, but its a fact. On one occasion, myself and a fellow called Stanley Shockness had

to jump in the river that run down to the old Pump Station and hide ourselves under the wild mango roots until all is over. So, it was something to watch and see the pieces of trees flying in the air. They used to call us the fire hags. After this the regular gang would pile it up. Then days, or weeks after, we the same lighters would go around with crude oil and a long brass torch, spilling the oil all over the heap, then apply our torch. Sir, another Hell roar again. Again, you may pardon me. And so, day after day and week after weeks, months after months, we went on piling up and burning up until we had that place where forms the Lake now, it were all clared of trees. After this the gang were scattered about, and some was layed off. Just then I decided to leave Gatun. Not many days passed by when I left for Las Cascadas. It was February carly, 1911. When I got up at Cascadas I went around the yard office. One of my friends pointed me out to Mr. Barnette the yard master. I spoke to him, and asked him if he could help me in a job as brakeman. Where did you worked last. At Gatun Sir I give him my clearance. He assigned me to Engine 246, down in the Cut at steam shovel 263, Conductor Heartwig, and Engineer Jungle. After a short time, I was put on Engine 603 running to Gatun, Conductor Lanning and Bealand Engineer. The engine went in the shop, I was put on 264 with a man name Palmer, used to wear a thick soul shoe. I dont remember the Engineer name. My train was made up of 25 small Western dump car, running to Calmita Junction or dump. One morning after our first load out, when we return they gave us a right-through flag to Culebro at 228 and 229 shovels facing each other, they load you in about 10 or 15 minutes. When getting ready to pull out, we receive news that Lirio had fell in. Lirio is little river, as I would call it, north east of Empire Bridge, I think. They were too much water in the Cut now. So, we got on at tower N to cut off, run around and to Balboa, but, arriving at Pedro Miguel yard master Gillram to head in at Mayflowers dump, the place which are now call Fort Clayton. On our way back we got orders to tie up at Pedro Miguel. Engineer and Conductor went back to Las Cascadas, while I remained at Miguel under Gillam, as relieving brake-man at times. Finally I was put on the switch engine. Change to night, coaling up engines and filling up tanks for next day. Again I was put back on day spell, running to Flemenco dump, all that place now call Fort Amador and La Boca, we dump it up. Soon after I was sent to Mayflowers under Penmann as yard master, to work with Jerry, and Muldoone as Conductor on Engine 298, which pulls two flat cars, with steel tanks on them. Our work was to go to Val Paraiso and fill those

tanks, and distribute it up at Corozal, Deablo, Balboa and part of Ancon. Then go back and run labour train from dykes siding, also ran as material train. Some time after, transfer to Balboa, where I again met Mr. Gillam. He again put me on the switch engine, where I ended my time in transportation in 1914, somewhere in March. About a month or so rolled by. Not working, I met a friend called Clarence Jones who took me aboard the 85 dredge. About six oclock the Captain came down and Jones said something to him. He asked me a few questions. Firstly, can you pull a boat? I did not know what to say. Anyhow Clarence told him Ill brake him in chief. So, I was on. Clarence warned me not to get in the way, when I see the Captain going ashore, because anyone he see first got to jump in the boat, so I hide about until Clarence tell me I am ok. Finally I was partly a No. 1 man different to a fellow call yallow. Bill Hervin was Captain, and Jordan as chief mate, better known as Cracker Jack. We dump up Albrook Field Balboa Flat, Corunda, and even near under the present beer factory at San Miguel now. When we started, it was out in the Channel until we reach up under the Captain of Port Building. This was up to the end of 1914. Well a reduction came, and some of us was layed off. Jobs got scarce, a couple of months after I heard of a little job open at Gamboa, chipping and painting barges. I succeeded of getting on. It was tough, pounding the decks all day with sleidge hammers some make half day, didnt come back, some one day, some two days some fall sick of the red lead and the hot sun, some on account of the Boat-swain call Duncan. No time to blow for him, I fight a long because I was in kneed, I never paid him any mind, finally they remove him and put him on Clappet 6 as Captain. He reccomend me to Mr. Cratz where I was made Boatswain of same gang. George S. Yates as general foreman, W. Wrapper craneman, also Gillis, another craneman. This was about 1915 March or April. I work up to 1917 and lay off. The German boats from Cristobal came to Balboa for repairs. First, before this I gotted on the tugboat Mariner with Captain Swencon, but it did not last too long, I was off again. It was here that I heard of the German boats job. I tried, but to no avail. I heard it was Mr Jordan on there as chief mate. So, one morning after picking a few men, M.P s get orders to clear the deck for they were hundreds of men trying, but, striving my way through the crowd, I manage to reach the hurricandeck where Mr. Jordan was, I shouted him, Oh Mr. Jordan. He in turn told Captain Stuart, here is a good man. Well, I was in a job again. Cleaning up the Captain room and Chief mate room, which was Jordan room. Sometimes I am on the 4 boats, cleaning up and dwn into the bildge, measuring up water with Mr. Jordan, old Cracker Jack,

the man whom I had left on the 5 dredge. These boats were the Savoia, Saxonwald Princess Jungmond, and Grunewald, but most of my time was on the Grunewald; when it was almost completed there was not a man, white or black to climb the mast to put up the small calbe to hang the wireless unto. No one volunteer to go. They was afraid the Germans did something up there. Cracker Jack told them, I hired you all as sailors said, Well someone will have to go. Turning to me, What about you, Shine, a name he used to call me on the 65 dredge. I paused a little, looked up at the mast, and then said, I'll go. He ran to Captain Stuart, I get a man who will go. Who? That fellow we call Shin. The dangerous part of it was about 12 to 15 feet, with hands and feet. So I began, I got a bale of quarter inch rope, tied around my waist and scraper, I began climbing every body stop and watching. Before I got to the last part of the ladders, Cracker Jack hollow to me, rest a little Shine. I started for the final part, I reach it, locking my foot around the mast, holding with my left hand pecking at the sheave block cutted into the mast. I got it to move, finally I got it spinning. Threading the rope through the sheave, I pull it down till it reach the deck where they made ~~xx~~ fast the small calbe and an oil can. From deck they began pulling whilst I squirted a little oil in the sheave, and that was done. Came down, rest off, and about 2 oclock, up I went to the after mast, and it was finish. I was highly praised and reccomended for the risk taken. So, we began cleaning up and claring deck until the Grunewald was declared sea worthy for the trip. If memory serves me right, I think it was the 26th of May 1917, about 11 oclock, I dont remember the day. After lockin through Mayflowers and Pedro Miguel and unto Gatun, it must to have been about six in or 7 oclock in the evening when we reach Cristobal. We tied up over night, take some cargo, next day we left. I think the battleship Charlestone went ahead of us as an escort because of the war. Days and nights sailing under black out orders we reach New York. Docked at 65 pier, and shift to 67. Well, we were taken off, and carried to 507 West and 14 Street Sailor Home, or Seaman's Institute. We were told if we like the place we are free to go where ever we wants to go or when the ready to return, you will be taken back. For about 3 weeks and days, we went at 24 States Building for our weekly allowance, till the ship was ready for its return. We had a crew of 72, white and black, only 22 of us return. Only difference was we went or on the Grunewald and returned on the same ship whose name was change to General C. W. Goethals. On our return trip at Cristobal we received our discharge papers, and also railway tickets to our home, sign by Charley Manns, Foreward end

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receiving Agencies. Thus ends the General G. W. Goethals who was sold to the Black Star Line Company. Well, at home again and doing nothing quite a while. I had some friends on the U.S. Culebro, and one day I gotted notice to come and see Captain Howard, they about to leave for Peru to tow down some German intern ship. So I got on. We left, I think it was the 18 day of Septembre 1918. We spent about 40 to 45 days for the trip. But on arriving it appears the Germans must have heard we came for the ships. Suddenly the Peruvian Government had to hussle them off, they began to destroy the ships. We reach Callao, then went to a place call Molliendo for one of the ships. They had some Peruvians engineers and labours fixing up the rudders and straightening propellers for the ~~the~~ tow. So, finally all set, we left Callao, when I do not remember. But we had the Luxor Nubisana Racotes, one behind the other, with one inch cable I think it was, not much difficulties, only the rear ship would be one way, and middle ship the other way at times. It looks as if it were a mile long. At any rate we reach back at Balboa. Just about the following day all the whistles started blowing the War had finish, Novembre 11th. So, after working around for a couple of months, I was figuring to back up to New York and stay. Me and the steward go away, and the Captain discharge me. Why, even the steward tell him to let me have back my job, because he was wrong to strike me first. Well, he was hard, so, I just didn't beg too much. This was somewhere in 1919. After hunting around for a job I finally pick up one in the La Boca Commissary a storeman delivering thing to the sections. The after I was made salesman in the Cold Storage department under the management of Diamond who was Inspector of Commissaries one time. Not very long after, 2 sections was close down one of the storeman and 2 salesmen and an order man was out, so, I had to ~~supply~~ <sup>seek</sup> another job. Not much time had passed when I decided to return to see Mr. George S. Yates, who succeeded A. B. Cratz because he was called off to the War. Mr. Yates gave back my job right away. And one day he call me, "Simmons, you want to take charge of one of the barges. OK I said, you'll work a little longer. So I got barge 16 to run to tore point carrying sand and gravel They gave me supplys and I was off to tor point, where I spent about 16 to 17 days. On my return went up the river, or taking a load at the gravel plant waiting for a tug. Some time after the Reliance came for me, pull me out under bridge and kitchon, at the same time, we had a Tipperrary scow, a thousand yard scow, barge 16 and a coal barge towing to Cristobal. This was the very morning when the Cristobal ran into the Tipperrary

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scow off Darien. We were cut loose from the Tipperary and left her hanging on to the bow. Even when dumped the scow she still cling on to the bow. The Cristobal bow was ripped as if it was cardboard. So, went on our way with the rest of the load. Well I reach Cristobal and I think tug boat La Boca towed me over to top point. I return back at the gravel plant where I was living in Building 27 only to be lay off not long after. In quarters rent had to be paid, so, I accepted a temporary job in the box car commissary as salesman and order man. A couple of months and out again. This time a little job I didn't like so much. I was with one hand Rawlson as boatman killing lillies and picking them also. Sometimes spraying with arsenic, of which the arsenic was too harsh, we had to put one by 12 boards at times and walk on the same lillies. Up the Chiriqui, Mandengo, Matachin, Basobispo, and many other places. The pay was small, and the same water bad for the foot. Many times you drop in the arsenic water, which scratches my feet plenty, I work, but I was looking somewhere else. And, so I started out on a walk from Gamboa to Pedro Miguel, I stopped a spur 40, at Mr. Joe Lindsey, Signal department. He took my name and where I live. Any telephone near where you live, yes sir, the Gravel Plant. I'll give you a call later on. And so he did, I came, and put me on a Speeder, running maintenance from Summit to the railway crossing in Panama. This was about 1921 to 1923 reduction came. But, before it came I had visited Mr. Dave Moore house in Miguel and asked him to help me in a job if possible he ask me if I could a boat, of course I can sir, very well, you say you can pull a boat, I don't mean to pull it with a rope; with oars, what I meant. He told me to come around, so, I think it was the 15th day of August 1923, and right away I was sent off to the Centre wall, to a boatswain called Frio. They were about to go off; for boat just as I got there I shouted the boatsman, hold it there, For cue, were the answer, Mr. Moore send me in the boat. I grabbed oars, shew me how you want it, I said to the one who tus the rope. He told me to go right out, as if you going to cross the ship bow, and turn your boat bow to the ship's bow and wait for the ship crew thro you a heaving line, and it was done. The other boatman meantime claiming, now I go a boat to help me. Then Mr. Frio went to Fred Bradley and this fellow is a sure and reliable boatman. A couple of days after I was transferred to the East side wall with Jake Hastel. Where I remain for about 16 years as boatman, and from the boat I was reccomended by Mr. Fred Bradley to Mr. Ernesto Doyle as electrician helper in Center wall tunnel, where I spend anoth 14 years and month.

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When I retired in 1953 October, thus ended my service for the Panama Canal Company. So, to the Editor and Sponsors of the Isthmian Historical Society, I hope and trust that this will meet your approval and judgement.

EDGAR LLEWELLYN SIMMONS

Born in the Island of Barbados  
B.W.I. on the 15 day of December  
1886.

Smith, James F.; no address given, envelope postmarked  
Cristobal, C.Z.

James F. Smith arived in the Ismust of Panama - 1906  
December 1. Start to work on December 2 - 1906 with Doctor  
Beerd as my boss of the health office my rate of pay at start  
was 10 cts per hour later on they removed me from 10 cts and  
put me by the month at 55<sup>00</sup> dollours \_\_\_\_\_. I was then on  
that Salarry until 1950, untill I retire at 1950 they never give  
any more rais and I never ask for any more I do compleate satis-  
fatory work acording to my boss all the time Silecting gabbage  
in Colon Citty my experience of working and cost of living was  
with every boddy in the Panama Canal and I feel acording to my  
experience of the Panama Canal we all have done a very good job  
acording to the traffio that have passing night and day and we  
are fully satisfied of the condition and the proformance of we  
the labours on the Panama Canal and the thankfullness of the  
United States of America

JAMES F. SMITH

Smith, Samuel A.; Estafeta Parque Lefevre, Panama, R.P.

I arrived on the Isthmus of Panama from Jamaica, B.W.I. in the month of October 1912.

My first employment was with the Dredging Division, Gamboa, C.Z. as a laborer, and after a period of four years I was promoted to an oiler on the U.S. Dredge Las Cruces under the supervision of Capt. Haiter. After a period of six years this dredge was sold and replaced by the U.S. Dredge Mindi under the supervision of Capt. Salabey.

During my 44 years of service I have resided in three town-sites, namely: La Boca, Paraiso and Gamboa. Married and raised four children, two sons and two daughters.

Living and working conditions in those days were of no comparison to today where you have better working conditions, better houses, higher education, payment of overtime when worked after eight hours instead of compensatory time only when you could be spared, opportunities to receive training for better job positions, civil service retirement, hospital insurance, accidental and life insurance, higher wages, better sanitation, etc.

During the construction days I have had the privilege to work under the administration of many governors, including Gov. Goethals, Burgess, Edgerton, etc., and Gov. Mehaffey at the time of my retirement in 1956.

My highest wage was \$52.50, and I had to make many sacrifices to educate my children. The education in those days was also limited in the Canal Zone schools.

My greatest experience was the construction of the Panama Canal, and I am more than proud to be among the many old timers who have helped so willingly in giving a hand in building this masterpiece. I am even more proud to be alive today, thank God, to enjoy the beautiful scenery and to witness its important participation in commerce to the world.

It is a job well done, and we must say thanks to God in helping to make this wonder a success, and a help to mankind.

Respectfully,  
SAMUEL A. SMITH IF-32863

Thomas, Charles W. ; Block V, Apt. 8 High Street, Castries,  
St. Lucia.

I noticed in our local news paper on the 15 June 1963,  
that you are asking for information in regards to workers of  
the early days of the Panama Canal to 1915

May I inform you Madam I can help in giving you some of  
my experience of the Panama Canal from memory, I have no dates  
of these happenings.

I am now 72 years of age and still quite active. I was  
in the isthmus of Panama from the year 1913 to 26 February  
1916 when I left for my native home on account of ill health.  
I have still in me some knowledge of the Panama Canal & the  
places I worked.

My first job was on the construction of Pedro Miguel  
locks & dam. The Construction Engineers were MacIntic Mar-  
shall & Company. I was quite young at that time I used to  
select rivets according to length, and pass them on to the  
rivitors. I worked there for a good while at 13 cts an hour.

From there I was employed as a Labourer at Balboa near the  
foundry taking iron nappet from an open truck to pile them up  
near the foundry.

I did not do much. I was fired when I had two days; I  
remember the foreman call to me & said to me you are fired,  
you are looking tired, he send me to the office with a slip  
of paper to get my time.

I was not exactly tired but I was feeling quite sick &  
just trying to make a week so that I could get a commissary  
book for \$2.50 to get something to eat & drink.

I went home for a week, at that time I used to live at  
22 Guashapalis Street, just opposite the train station in  
Panama.

My third job was at Fle Ingo I had a job there, three  
of us spudding in the harbour with a American we were listing  
how far the rock is from the mud, at that time they were  
building the Fortification on the Pacific end of the Canal, I  
worked there for a few months, at times we had quite a lot of  
difficulty to get back to the main land when the tide was up.

I walked through many tunnels in that Fort when it was  
in progress.

My next job was at Balboa Heights at the Administration Building, I work around there from the starting to finish at the foundation.

I was one time a signal man sitting under a big tree, there was a trolley just behind the tree about 20 yards away, pulling up the materials for the Building. It was worked by a long cable, and a cable was passed around the tree with a large shackle, to switch the materials on to the Building yard I was the switch man

During that construction one man was killed who was working in a concrete gang, he fell from the elevator to the ground and broke his neck.

My next job I used to work in the flat by Balboa, at the eastern end where they were extending the wharf. I saw two West Indians men, one Joe Velox & one Bently died in a deep pit they were sinking to from part of the dock. These two men died from some gas which accumulate in that pit during the night; because they worked there the previous day up to the time of the whistle both men were from St. Vincent. I knew them quite well.

My next & final job was on board the Rock Breaker Vulcan. I started to work from 1st October 1914 until I quit the Canal Zone in 1916 on account of ill health.

The Vulcan was a rock breaker we used to work in Balboa Harbour all around by Corozal until the last dyke at Myrafloris locks was opened. I was one of the early West Indians who went through that part of the canal up to Culabara cut. I spent many days & night working in that locality.

I could remember one night whilst the ship was working, the huge iron ram of the Vulcan was punch into something at the bottom of the Canal & the machine of the Vulcan could not pull the ram.

The next day all the big officials of the Canal came with the aid of a large crane; a diver went down it was discovered that this ram went into a boiler of a ship which was exploded in that part of the Canal some time earlier.

I worked on the Vulcan until the job was finished & we were laid off. The Captain of the Vulcan was one Irwin an American, the Engineer was one Johnson a German America. My

Thomas, C. . - p.3

job on the Vulcan was boiler, the day fireman was name Castro, the night fireman was a Barbadian I dont remember his name.

I was working on the Vulcan when the hugh fire in Colon burnt out over 100 blocks.

I was there when the first drilling boat named Theredo was blown up in Balboa Harbour just outside the Panama Railroad dock and injured many of its crew.

I was in the Canal Zone when all the graves of the Ancon Cemetry was exhumed and remains were burnt in an oven in the Said Cemetry, that was during the Construction of the Administration building.

My longest period of work was at Cula-bra cut.

My last place of residence was San Reguel not far from the rail lines

I am not quite sure of my check number, I believe one was 44382 not sure, in those days I was quite young & inexperience Now I am a Retired Police Sergeant.

I remain yours sincerely  
CHARLES M THOMAS

Thomas, Donald W.; 842 Belmont Land, St. George's, Grenada,  
B.W.I.

I beg to say from 1908 to 1920, I was employed at the Administration Bldg., Balboa as Helper to the Official Photographer, Mr. Ernest Hallen, which work took me from the Atlantic Ocean to the Pacific Ocean, making Progress pictures of the Canal. I might say from Gatun taking pictures of the Locks, and Spillway, during Construction, and of the diggings throughout the Canal and lastly the blowing of the Gamboa Dye, the entering of both waters, which site in my estimation cannot be duplicated, and lots of minor pictures taken such as the Palo Seco Leper Asylum. Leaving the Panama Canal for the United States in America, where I became an American Citizen. I am today retired and living in Grenada, B.W.I. Hoping to hear from you soon.

Respectfully  
DONALD W. THOMAS

Thomas, Fitz H.; House 2829, 13 St., Rio Abajo, Panama, R.P.

This is to certify I Fitz H. Thomas arrived on the isthmus April 3rd on contract as a labourer for the Panama Canal in 1905. I took residence in Culebra and began to work on the track line. I soon helped to build Culebra jail as a carpenter; my gen. foreman was Mr. Greir, my foreman was a black man, John \_\_\_\_\_ of Jamaica, and the work we performed was so good Mr. Greir transferred us to the white quarters, and removed the white gangs as they failed in finished work. I later worked for Mr. Greig the Dock Master of the dry dock, sometimes we had to go and dock the boats but Mr. Sky a foreman prevented me many times from leaving my job. I later went to the building division with Mr. Small as my foreman and as we were moving from Amador road, Mr. Small left myself and Allan Loyd to hang doors. Loyd was retired from the Administration building and Charles Gordon took his place I think he is still there, Loyd, Gordon, and Guy and Crawford were special and Douglas

In the early days we suffered severely from the bad water we had to drink, but thank God and the Americans for the filtration plant built by Longworthy.

Sincerely yrs  
FITZ H. THOMAS

I was retired from the Hotel Tivoli as carpenter, and while I was there I saved the Hotel from great loss and Mr. James Lewis went to Balboa Heights to get me retired and Mr. Watson refused, and Lewis then took his resignation and through my recommendation Mr. Andrew Johnston a former manager there was replaced back to the Tivoli to run the hotel in buying the necessary things needed.

I came from Barbados in 1905.

Waisome, Jeremiah; P.O. Box 472, Colon, R.P.

This is my story of life in Panama and the Canal Zone. I was born in Bluefields Nicaragua in the year 1895, my mother brought me in Panama when I was 7 months old, when I did not have sense enough I knew that we were living on the lines they call Rio Grande, just across were from where my mother was living the French was still digging the canal, at the time they had some small French locomotive the 700 type with a few cars, mostly looks like a western dump, but much smaller than the American western dump. and these locomotives had no safety valve, at times the locomotive would blow to pieces with engineer fireman and all, first to begin with the French had no system in their organization. A man can work on 5 different jobs a day, and when the week ended you collect for those 5 jobs, their timekeeping system was poor, during these days we had all kind of revolutions, especially when voting for President, should one party win, the opposition side claim it's a fraud, then the shooting starts, men's life did not mean much those days, the cheapest thing to buy those days is gun and bullets, they were sold in chink shops or in any stores, no restrictions in buying a gun. they were all American made. at those days every man owns a gun. whenever time the voting is to get under way all the natives would move all their belongings to the interior. because most of the fighting are in the city, before the election my Mother would stock up supplies in her home in preparation for the elections, when the shooting starts we had to lay flat under our bed pretty near a week, you could hear the bullets rolling off the roof tops when everything cleared off perhaps they run out of shots, when my Mother comes out in the morning you could see bullet holes through the side of the buildings, and a lot of corps laying around, to make things short my Mother move over to Panama, just where the local rate service center was just at the foot of Tivoli hotel, there was a lot of wooden building facing the railroad track, that place was called Polvo nuevo, my step father was a fireman on the Panama railroad then he promoted to locomotive engineer.

I could remember when I started to go to Arte Oficio school in Panama, in the morning we go into class, lunch time at 11 o'clock and at noon say 1 o'clock we return to school each boys will find their place in different shops, whatever trade you selected, such as mechanic, cabinet, or any other trade. our teachers were mostly from Spain, and they were very polite. during the time going to school, the construction of the Panama canal were underway, I saw many of my

friends on pay day with a lots of big balboas the temptation were too great to resist, unknown to my Mother one morning instead of goin to school, I went to Balboa to look myself a job, I was about the age of 12 or 13 years, there was no regulation on age. at that time most of the dirt dug from the canal were sent to dump the sea from balboa to flamenco, I approach a boss one morning for water boy job, I said good morning boss, he retorted good morning boy, at this time he had a big wad of tobacco chewing I ask him if he needs a water boy he said yes, he ask what is your name I told him, I notice that my name did not spell corectly as Jeremiah Waisome, so I said excuse me boss my name do not spell that way, he gave me a cow look, and spit a big splash, and look back at me and said you little nigger you need a job, I said yes sir, he said you never try to dictate to a white man, take that bucket over there and bring water for those men over there, the kind of work the men were doing is to ballas the track, every time a loded train unload the dirt and rock into the sea. they pulls away back to Gorgona or to culebra, to be loaded, a locomotive - standing by with a spreader, this spreader is a flat car is converted with a mechanical frame built on top with wings like a bird on both side set on a 45 degrees angle, dirt can be spread on either side if it had to, the spreader has got air hose connection from the locotive to operate it, the conductor operate the spreader with leavers to lower and lift by notches, the brakeman would squeeze himself in a hole under the wings to put a pin every time the conductor lower and raise the wings, occording to notches, to spread the dirth, I were too young for that kind of work, because condition out ther were too rough, every now and again the spreader would turn over and men get kill. so I left and get myself a job at the balboa hotel under a Manager with an alias name tanglefoot. I work there for a few months, and left again and got another job at miraflores as a switch tender, things were mighty rough out there too, but I stick it, it means nothing to see men get kill daily, either by train, accident, or explosion by dynamite, the locks gate were built by the McClintic marshal partly every day you could hear the scarfle would cut away with drill, reamers and other equipment with white & black gone down to 75 feet to the bottom of the locks to there doom. there were no safety these days, one morning we left panama on a labor train engine no 318, engineer Healy was at the trottle, just little beyond the new corozal railroad station goin towards Miraflores, there was a dead

end track left open by some careless night hustlers, the locomotive was going at full speed with a labor train of about 10 cars, run through the switch where there was about 5 loaded western dump cars with sand, and the morning was dark, no switch lights, and hit those cars the engineer jump, the fireman got kill, and many workers got kill, one could hear the moaning and the hollering, that morning it was awfull. to see the dead scattered around, God was with me that morning, this happens between corozal and miraflores, this happens about 545 AM, there were no switch lights. Another accident happens in the canal between Miraflores and Corozal there were a few hundred men and boys making the last drilling so that the water from the Pacific side could move in nearer to the locks, with Tripod drills loading holes with dynamite it was a hot sunny day, just about noon, every body busy men and boys working, something went wrong, and there was a big explosion; men boys and machines went up in different directions some has not been found until today. when the smoke cleared off, one could see human flesh dangling from trees nearby.

After the completion of the Miraflores locks, all the switchmen and brakemen that had more time of service were pick out and sent or transfer to balboa, to work on the dry dock. after the completion of the dry dock, I secure a job at paraiso on drill boat Torido, under the command of Captain Rabiteau. drill operator Messers Shelton, Lloyd, and Battenfield, this is the night shift. we work 12 hours a day, except sundays and hollidays the sailors take turn to stand watch aboard sundays and holidays, our rate was about \$35.00 a month, this was another dangerous job, drilling rocks at the bottom of the canal, According to the different slides, we drill by ranges, and we load between 20 to 30 sticks of dynamites according to the size of the rocks through charger rods. One evening I went to work and there was no drill boat right at the foot of gold hill where most of the trouble were. another explosion blew up torido number 1 that bold her over that sent the captain and men to there death, shortly after another boat was built and sent down Torido number 2, I work there for about a year and quit. I got myself another job at another department, there were no insurance those days, and no time for safety, everything was in a hurry.

before closeing the Panamanian were call spickidee, and a panamanian cop dare not cross the canal zone, sometimes a panamanian cop would be chasing a man that commit himself in

Waisome, Jeremiah - p.4

the republic and forgot that he is on the canal zone, he would be arrested both men, and tried by judge Blackburn, and for 10 days in jail for disturbing the peace. The rate for water boy is 7 cents an hour, and labourer is ten cents. I got retired in 1957 left the quarters in December, I plead to give me a chance to enjoy the benefit on the civil service, which would be in effect in about the next six months but to no avail, I got to adopt my last child to keep him in school, which he will be graduated from school next February. I were compel to tell a lie on myself by signing a document saying that I am sick to get on the disability relief. I am getting \$55.00 a month and thank God for this and the canal zone government. Although its a problem for me with my boy graduation coming up, but in God we trust.

yours truly.  
JEREMIAH WAISOME

Webb, Samuel; McKie's Hill, Kingstown, St. Vincent, B.W.I.

I arrived on the Isthmus of Panama in August of 1907. I sailed on a boat called the "Solent." On my arrival I soon obtained work with The Isthmian Canal Commission. I was put, first of all, on the job of grading lands at San Pablo. But, later on, I was sent to work at Gatun. Here I worked on the building of a dock for the landing of cement, stone and sand, which was needed in the construction of the Gatun Spillway. Where the locks and dam now stand there were houses which had to be removed. They were removed to the eastern side of the railroad. This work was done with steam shovels. The earth was carried away by dirt train to where it was needed. Steel towers were set up on both sides of the locks to convey concrete across from the mixer to the place where it was needed. On the towers were very large cable wires on which the buckets ran. This was worked by electricity. At Gatun Spillway with its wall and power station were two mixers worked by a steam boiler. There was a small dock there for unloading stone, sand and cement. Here there were fourteen gates which were used for the purpose of releasing pressure from the guard gates at the southern of Gatun Lake. Two officers were stationed at Gatun. They were Colonel Sybert and Major Harding.

In the early days of the construction of the Canal, sanitation was not very good. Mosquitoes abounded and there was always the danger of catching malaria. Nevertheless, we were well taken care of by the American Government, which sent out doctors to look after the health and physical well-being of the workers on the Canal.

During my stay in Panama, I worked from Cristobal to Fort Amador. For sometime I worked on the building of the sub-station at Hayflowers and also at Balboa.

West Indians were well treated by the Company which supplied us with board and lodging until the opening of the Canal.

For most of my stay in Panama I lived at Gatun.

In the year 1913 a little boat passed through the Gatun Locks and went up the Gatun Lake for about ten miles. This was one of the very first boats to make the trip up. It was a highly successful one.

Webb, S. - p.2

I continued working at Gatun where I lived until 1917.  
I worked between Mt. Hope and Cristobal.

In the year 1913 I got married to a Vincentian, Beatrice Slater, who was living and working at Gatun. After our marriage my wife continued to work there.

In the year 1919 my work with the Company was finished and I returned to St. Vincent accompanied by my wife.

signature is on separate letter  
which accompanied this.

Weeks, Castilla M.; no address given, envelope postmarked  
Camboa.

I arrived on the Isthmus of Panama on the 22 June 1906, aboard a ship by the name of "Trent". From the ship we were taken to the Paraiso Camp.

The following morning, equipped with picks and shovels we were ready for manual labor. There were no roads, just foot tracks along Paraiso, Pedro Miguel and Miraflores. It appears as if things were just starting, we had to pave the way, building roads and tracks with very little equipment to do the necessities.

It appears as if there were no natives around. Sanitation was very poor, with very little shelter. It was nothing but woodland, we were open to sun and rain. Things were so tough on arrival that many were force to return to their homelands, while others seek employment with private contractors. Many had to cultivate on open lands, in order to have something to live by.

The first four years Malaria was to its heights, with just a few doctors and very little medicine, most of us had to refer back to the old reliable West Indian home remedies.

The filling between Paraiso and Pedro Miguel to Corozal, was the most spaceable filling for western dump, receiving the material from the canal.

The Panama Railroad Depot was located opposite the Spillway Bridge, until the new relocation in 1909. After the filling we worked back and forth with the new relocation (Track Line).

A quarter mile from Gatun Railroad Station we laid the first switch for the new relocation. The job became hazardous when we got to the two mile area, this task involved the blasting of hills with dynamite.

One Sunday morning, I had a vision and I did not go to work, a gang of 30 men were carrying two carloads of dynamite, one box

Weeks, C. M.

fell off and the wheels ran over it and everyone was blasted to bits. Only the supervisor Mr. C. G. Jones, the timekeeper and myself were saved from the explosion. Fortunately I did not go to work that tragic morning. I must say, it was only through prayers and the workd of GCD that stoped me from going to work day.

The new relocation was completed in time to greet President Theodorè Roosevelt in 1912. Going back to 1906 when I arrived in Panama, the President of Panama was Belisario Parras. From Paraiso to Cerozal they were only foot tracks approximately two feet wide. There was no electricity, the streets were luminated with Kerosene Lamp Posts and horse and buggy were the only means of transportation.

Panama City was extended as far as Casino, Bella Vista, San Francisco, Vista Hermosa, Sabanas, Pueblo Nuevo, Rio Abajo, Old Panama, Juan Diaz, Fedregal and many other towns in the outskirts were nothing but woodland.

In those days they were no law or order in Panama, you might take a walk to see what the City looks like, and find yourself in jail without committing an infraction. Not knowing the native language or the native knowing your language, you was thrown in jail without any consideration with fines beyond your earnings.

Henceforth, many of us were forced to keep out of Panama City in order not to get involved.

After working a short period of time clearing the woodland in Portobelo, I was hit by Malaria for approximately 4 days in the Colon Hospital. After servival, I began to work for the Maintenance Division as a grass barber. My first Quartermaster was Mr. Pat Morgan, who died recently. After things began to shape up, I started to work for Mr. R. A. CARTER, Municipal Division, where I worked until I was retired on 15 February 1948.

VERY TRULY YOURS

C WEEKS  
PAD-3569

West, Alonzo F.; Colon Post Office, Colon, F.P.

I arrived here in Panama on the 18th day of July 1912, and two days after I got a job in Gatun Cement Shed over Spillway the General Foreman were Mr Gay. After being laid off from there I worked for McClintic and Marshall on the building of the gates in Gatun locks. I worked there for 8½ months at that time convenience were very scarce so at times I had to climb on rope or cable wire like a monkey to get to the scaffold where I had to work, but thank God, I saw many of my comrades fall and lay dead, but the only reward that I got was a cut over my right eye with a hot rivet and after being laid off from there I got a job working for the first division. Pulling cables that works the Power house and under the tunnels and doing electric work all around and I worked there until after the opening of the waterway, then the first thing to pass through were the tug boat Gatun. There were many white men around there whose name I really don't remember, but one was Mr Delong. After being laid off from that I did a few more short jobs which did not last long. I worked on the transmission line, the wires running along the railroad on the poles, the last two days of the month, sometime in the end of 1914, and I never got no pay for it, it were 13¢ per hour 9 hrs per day. On the Pay day when I went for the check, there was none for me, and I ask the foreman, and he said, maybe through being the last two days of the month, that may be the cause of the mistake, and the next month there were none. So I became the loser of 2.34. And in 1915, February I began to work on Railroad Docks in Cristobal, until 1917 July, I joined the British Expeditionary force in world war I, and went on to Europe. I returned back here from France July 24th 1919, and two months later I worked again on the docks until the end of 1953. Old age catch up on me and my service were terminated. Please excuse me for any mistakes, for old age takes away remembrance.

I Remain Your Servant  
ALONZO F WEST  
DR No. 6216

Wheatley, Simeon T. (Cedula #13915); Frangipani St., Bld. 51,  
Room 14; Estafeta No. 1, Caledonia, Panama, R.P.

I arrived in the Isthmus in the Month of March 1907. I start to work for the canal Commission. The Quarter Master Department Corral as a Teamster driving mule wagon. My duty was to Deliver coal, kindle, ice and furniture around the Quarters of the White folks Sometime Commisary Supplies at a section call Empire over the Westbank, where the main force of the workers live on the Pacific side of the Canal. The White people section were different to the Colored I have to draw feed for the animals to a place that is call Mandinga where the Government raise these animals, horses, mule, and cattle. In the Corral there were many Teamsters employ, and all hauling was done by mule and horses untill trucks and automobile were brought in later after the Canal was open August 1915. Sanitation was very poor and many people died from malaria fever and other ailment such as Dysentery typhoid etc. There were many deaths from accident train collision Then they start to build the road from Fort Amador to Flamingo Island through the Sea. Train haul the rocks and debris from the Canal were use to build the road. They were people got kill and injured by Steam Shovel, and train in the Canal there was an explosion from a powder house where Dynamite was kept, not far from Empire which kill many people, that section was call Bas Obispo. The wages paid to laborers was 10 cents per hour, making 8 and 10 hours per day. Some people were paid Monthly wages I were paid monthly making \$40 per month. Mess hall was provided for the Colored workers, meals were served three times per day at a cost of 20 cents per meal ticket which were pay roll deduction the meals were good and much food was given, Coal Stove were used in these Mess Kitchen, and also in the homes of the white people They were Government Schools for the white children and we have to drive them to and from schools in special wagon. The Colored children had to go to private school there were also churches. A bridge was constructed at Paraiso across the Canal from east to West bank over which the train ran the old Railroad between Panama and Colon connecting the atlantic and Pacific continue in operation untill the Canal was completed, by that time it had required its present route.

SIMEON T. WHEATLEY  
D.R. 3164

White, Edward Adolphus; Estafeta Parque Lefevre; Panama, R.P.

It was a very bright and sunny afternoon when I arrived in Colon on the 28th day of April 1911. Just off the boat from Jamaica, from the Parish of Westmoreland, I boarded the train which took me to the little town of Matachin, small, but crowded. Life buzzed there like any big city. My memory is not very keen today, but I remember well the path leading up to the little Zone, because I felt so strange and lonely as I stood and watched the children at play on the walk.

They seem to have been coming from school or were being guided by a teacher, for the lady came up to me and asked if I was a stranger. I replied, and also told her my name. She was very friendly and told me too her name was Emma Monroe, and that she was one of the teachers on the Zone.

As a young man of 20 years, she advised me how to take care of myself, where to walk and how to choose my friends. There were four of us strangers, and we lodged with an elderly man in a little place called "Banana Walk."

On the morrow we rose early with the thought of seeking a job. I personally was indeed lucky, as I obtained a position that day in the Sanitary Dept., with Mr. Brown, the foreman. It wasn't much of a job anyway, as they had more men than work; so, within a few weeks I was laid off, and right away was employed by the Railroad Dept., whose foreman was Mr. Arthur, (whom we used to call Old Arthur) and the timekeeper was Walwin R. Chambers.

The lonely feeling started to leave me, as these men treated me like their own. Mr. Arthur, Mr. Chambers, and I were so knitted together, I felt as if I was their own son.

It was through their encouragement that I left the Railroad Dept. and succeeded in getting a better position at the Gorgona Foundry. I worked there until 1914 when I was again put off. My stay at Gorgona was pleasant. Being young and agile, and willing to work, I was well treated by every one I came in contact with. White and coloured sought me out. I was always ready and willing to serve. I was away from my parents, my sisters and brothers, but I did not feel the absence of them all, because I found others who made me homely.

White, E. A. - p.2

But the time came when I had to leave again and seek elsewhere. So, I came up to Panama, and through recommendation got a job at the Balboa Foundry. I worked there just as pleasant until 1920 when the strike came on, and a lot of us were out of work. I was not destined to be out of work for long. It was only two months after when I was again employed at the Corozal asylum. Reduction of force came in and I was off again, and got a call to present myself at the Y.M.C.A. I was there for almost two years when I was again reduced.

I then turned my nose to the Gorgas Hospital. I worked there but did not like it. I sought a better position which I obtained at the "Ancon Club House."

During those various changes, I also did a few months work at Fort Amador in waiting at the Service Club. I worked at the Ancon Club House for nearly two years again. My stay there was not pleasant. My co-workers and I did not get along nicely. But my employer's treatment were encouraging.

Then, they transferred me to the Ancon Laundry where I served for 27 years until my retirement in 1954.

At the time of my retirement, I felt I was still able and strong to keep on working many more years. I was disappointed and missed the going to work daily. I also missed the presence of those I used to be with. My employers and my fellow-workers. Not that my years of working there were all pleasant ones. No! Some of the times I would wonder why do I stay on? But human beings are the same all the world over. We would be happy one day, and trouble-some the next. But in spite of all the indifferences, we stood for each other.

The little bickerings did not alter our opinions of one another, nor caused any dislike between us. Personally, I missed all my folks, for we were a jolly lot at the Ancon Laundry.

Naturally, I must end my story by saying my entire life's work with the Panama Canal, starting from the age of 20 until the ripe age of 63 were pleasant ones.

Today I am a very sick man, stricken with a stroke for almost three years. But I am also a lucky man; for God has

White, E. A. - p.3

provided me with a care-taker who cares me like a baby.

And all that you good people have done for us, and are still doing, I am most grateful. The packages of food every month, the Doctor's care, the Nurse's attendance, the medicines and the kind patience with us who are so miserable at times with continual pains and complaints, and with the thought of trying to give us a raise in our monthly salaries, how can I find words enough to express my gratitude in any other way, but, by thanking Almighty God for you all.

May God never cease to bless America, its Presidents, and its people. May "He" strengthen you all, and keep you that you will always be able to help us the poor ones, who have to depend solely on the mercy of God, and the goodness of the American People.

EDWARD A. WHITE  
D.R. 7209

Williams, James A.; Justo Arosemena Street, Post Office  
Box 4673, Panama R.P.

I endeavor to give a brief history of my experience in the old construction period of the I.C.C. days. I landed on the 4th day of March 1910 in Colon, on the S.S. Metapan, with my Aunt Mrs. Greenidge, who had her home in the Section called San Pablo, C.Z. Her house was right against the hotel. My first job that I tackled was janitor for the labour camps in that Section under Mr. Farr as the District Quartermaster.

As a boy in those days I find that I was not so qualified with that kind of work and the Foreman Mr. Farmer shifted me over to the Subsistent Department as a Helper in the Kitchen in said Section. San Pablo. There I had to work 12 and 13 hours each day. This place was situated on the bank of the Shagres River, where mosquitoes frequent especially at nights. Consequently, I began to get fever.

One morning the Doctor making his usual visit to the Kitchen some one reported to him that I am having fever. The Doctor immediately advanced to me and felt my pulse; I could remember he said to me "you are going to be sick boy," go right over to the "Sick Camp" and tell the Clerk to write you up to the Hospital, right a way. He further asked me, Are you a God fearing man? I replied yes. He said to me you are going to die. It was near time for the midday train and the Doctor ran over to the Sick Camp and assisted to write up the necessary papers and I was placed on the train to the Ancon hospital. Dr. Beard was the name of the Doctor in that Section.

I was placed on a bed on the train to the hospital all the way and when the train arrived in the Panama Station, there were many horse drawn ambulances awaiting to receive the patients to the hospital. We then arrived in the big Ward 30 to be lined up and a very pleasant American nurse was right on the job and started to feel the pulses and assigned each patient to the different bed. As I notice when she came to me and took my hand, she appeared to be frightened and she called to the Orderly and said to him do not put this patient under the shower, give him a bed bath. I wondered to myself what as to what is this bed bath. Because I had never been in an Hospital before. However, I was escorted to the Ward by the Orderly Mr. St. Hill and he turned me over to one Mr. Norman Piercy right from my home in Portland, Jamaica, W.I. but we at that time did not recognized each other. St. Hill said to Piercy, Give this patient a bed bath. While kept wondering in my mind what do they mean by this bed-bath when I saw this Mr. Piercy placed

a heavy water-proof Blanket in the bed and two buckets full of heavy crushed Ice and several buckets of water and not even the courtesy as to consult me but stripped me naked and threw me in that cold deadly water. To be truthful, I thought I could not any longer live. However, he gave me a thorough bathing and took me out and dried me with a towel and placed me in a white clean bed. I felt cool for a moment but still fretting over the Iced bath as I had never heard or seen anything of that kind before.

This Ward was where the Engineer of Maintenance is being housed today. Ward 30 -32.

The next shock I had while I felt a little thirsty and when I saw some one coming (Nurse) with a wing glass of water I felt glad as I thought it was some cool water which I felt so much the need and the kindly Nurse handed it to me and said drink it. So thirsty for a drink of water, I hurried and as it reached my lips it was down my stomach. I tell you, I had never before tasted anything so terribly bitter. I always hearing about Quinine but I thought it was something tasty and nice. And every two hours I was dosed with that bitter liquid night and day and instead of getting rid of the fever it was growing worse.

Then the next thing that happened. I was placed in front of the Nurse s desk and a basin with clean water was placed on the stand beside me, I then thought it was water placed there for me to drink As I felt thirsty at the time I used my hand and took three hand full three times and swallow and when I heard the Nurse called to me and asked what, that you do drink it? I could not answer her but I saw when she picked up the Telephone I really did not know what happened until I discovered about five Doctors over me and find myself throwing up. And a few hours after I was settled I noticed they drew some blood from my arm. I then noticed from that time there no more of that bitter licuid. The whole night I was not bothered with that stuff.

The next morning two men came with a Stretcher and lifted me from the bed and placed me on the Stretcher and carried me off out of the Ward. I thought they were going to bury me as I was actually given over as dead. However, I was taken to Ward 24, as it was called just where the Governor's house, that was the place where typhoid patients were being treated. They found out that the fever I had was typhoid and not malaria.

What I can truthfully say Those American Nurses my own dear mother could not be more kind and tender to me. They did every thing lies humanly even to let me take a little nourishment so to keep life in ~~my~~ my body. I should right here tell of the incident with the water I drank from the

basin on the stand beside my bed. It was poisoned water to kill flies that buzzed around when I thought it was placed there for me to drink as I had never, before entered an hospital.

I could never, never in life forget the tender kindness those American Nurses administered to me especially in that particular Ward 24. I had no desire for nourishment of any kind, my life was ebbing out. But how they plead with me to take some nourishment. Not only that, but they closely watched the colored Orderlies how they handle the patients.

One night, the Nurse on duty came to me, she said to me now, bed 6, if you do't take some nourishment you would never get well and the tone she spoke to me with her hand on my head I forced to swallow a little milk and from that I continued to take little by little and a few days past, and she came on duty the night and took my temperature she said to me you are getting better "bed 6." I began to feel a desire for the milk now, very fast. Then they started to give egg-nog twice a day also real American Whiskey every day. I was not allowed to raise my head from the pillow even though I am feeling well. I began to feel real hungry but only liquid diet was given me for over three weeks after the fever left me. One mid day at breakfast I was given a toasted Potato. Oh. how I enjoyed it. Even that did not satisfied my starving appetite. I was therefore convinced by the Nurses and Doctors such starvation was for my good.

One morning in the month of May Dr. Connor the Night Doctor came in, that Ward were then run by himself and Dr. Bates. Dr. Connor came to my bed side with the Nurse and took up my Chart, asked me how you feeling James? I replied, ok. doctor. He asked me you hungry? I replied yes doctor. He turned and ordered her to give me light diet and pair of Pajamas.

The morning in question when I was given the Pajamas and was told to get out of the bed and tried to walk, every step that tried I had to be supported. That morning I was given a bowl of porridge, two eggs, nice bread and butter, a lovely slice of melon. But they never ceased to give the Whiskey and Eggnog during the days, and a week later I was given "FULL DIET." I was then feeling happy and good as when at meal time when we are told that what ever we like having that's not on the table just call.

I was discharged in May and the treatment had me so fat an robust that when I went home to San Pablo Aunt was surprize to see how good I was looking.

I took sick in April and was in the Hospital until May

Williams, J. A. - p.4

1910. My next job after in the Mechanics Shop in Gorgona, C.Z. After that I worked for the Transportation Division between Miraflores and Balboa as telephone Operator and Switchtender under Mr. Pennman.

When the water was put in the Canal when the Dyke burst I was working at the Corozal Commissary as Salesman. Working for that Division up until 1920 I was terminated and I went to Cuba and returned in October 1921. I was reemployed in October 1922 in the Commissary in Pedro Miguel, Canal Zone, between that Commissary and Ancon also La Boca, terminated from the La Boca Commissary in 1926, I never was again employed until February 1927 in the Dredging Division, Office Helper.

Terminated from the Dredging Division I worked for the Ancon Post Office for a few months when I resigned and was reemployed in the Municipal Engineering Division in October 1928 as Office Helper. At the Alajuela Road where I was terminated and went over to the Constructing Quartermaster Division up to 1932. Due to cessation of work. I went over to the Pacific Lock Overhaul in 1933 as Checker to the end of that Project.

I did not remember to mention that in 1918, March, I was a Salesman in the Gamboa Commissary when that Terrible Train Accident when the engine of the North bound Passenger train slipped from Coach which caused the biggest passenger train accident on the Isthmus.

At that time through error I was going by the name of George Williams.

1934 I was then reemployed in the Dredging Division and due to cessation of work I was let out in 1935.

Reemployed in 1939 in the M.E. Division where I worked up to 1942, and was terminated. Reemployed in the Building as messenger and was transferred to the Division where I worked up 1946 and reemployed in Duplicating Plant at Diablo, C.Z. Terminated there I was reemployed in the Building as a Messenger. There I was Retired from the Panama Canal service as Physical Disability, in 1949.

Respectfully yours  
JAMES A. WILLIAMS, DR #4111.

P/S

So far I can say of a truth, the terrible effects of that fever is still telling on my nerves.

Brown, Samuel N.; Apartado 3408, Calidonia, Panama, R.P.

Born in Jamaica, West Indies:- Arrived on the Isthmus 1913:- Started to work as a waiter in 1914 at the then I.C.C. hotel, Balboa:- In the year 1919 I was employed as an attendant at the old Ancon Hospital, and even when the name was changed to Gorgas, I continued to work untill december 1944. covering a period of 25 years & 7 months:- Worked at Paraiso Clubhouse from June 1945 to March 1953, when I got retired.

Inasmuch as the working conditions in the different departments fluctuates, but you can be assured that I had enjoyed most of the time working with the good government of The United State of America Canal Zone.

With much esteem, I beg to remain,

Yours Very Truly,

S. N. Brown  
D.R. 5591