



The Mini Page

Betty Debnam, Founding Editor and Editor at Large



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Centennial Celebration

The Panama Canal

Imagine yourself as a businessman living on the East Coast of the United States 170 years ago. The country is growing toward the West, and your company's products, iceboxes, are needed in new settlements. But the railroad that will cross the continent is still 25 years from completion. You would like to move your goods by ship.



In the 1800s, a ship traveling from the East Coast to the West Coast of North America had to travel all the way around the tip of South America. The journey was long and dangerous, as the winds around Cape Horn stir up huge waves. People began to look for a shorter, safer passage.

A trail across Panama

As early as the 1500s, Europeans thought a canal might cross the **isthmus*** in Panama. In 1850, a geographer from Great Britain discovered a trail across the isthmus. Officials from the U.S., France, England and Colombia explored the area, but the difficulties of traveling through the jungle discouraged them.

* An isthmus is a narrow strip of land with water on either side.



A different idea

A group from the United States thought a railroad could cross the isthmus. The Panama Railroad was completed in 1855 and was hugely successful.

While building the railroad, engineers found a gap in the mountains at Culebra that they thought would offer a perfect setting for a ship canal.

Colombia makes a deal

At the time, Panama belonged to Colombia. For more than 20 years, governments and engineers argued about the best place to build a canal.

A French businessman, Ferdinand de Lesseps, had built the Suez Canal connecting the Mediterranean and Red Seas in Egypt. He thought he could build a similar canal in Panama. Finally, in 1881, construction began.

But the conditions in Panama were very different. Equipment rusted quickly in the humid atmosphere. An earthquake damaged the work in progress. Landslides slowed the work and killed or injured workers. Laborers suffered from disease.

Finally, de Lesseps and his business partners gave up, and construction stopped on the canal in 1889.

A Century of Service

The Panama Canal is celebrating its centennial, or 100th anniversary, this year. The canal officially opened on Aug. 15, 1914. The American Society of Civil Engineers has named it one of the seven wonders of the modern world.



Overcoming Obstacles

New owners

In 1902, the U.S. government bought the Panama Canal Co. As the U.S. was trying to reach agreements with Colombia about the canal, people in Panama were planning to separate from Colombia.

The U.S. agreed to support Panama. In late 1903, U.S. military ships arrived near Colón, Panama, to help defend it against Colombian troops.

The Panamians declared independence from Colombia without having to fight. And the United States was able to proceed with building the Panama Canal.

Disease

One of the biggest obstacles for the workforce was sickness. Malaria and yellow fever, spread by mosquito bites, killed more than 22,000 workers before 1889.

In 1904, the United States asked Dr. William C. Gorgas to lead the fight against the deadly diseases.



One of the ways Dr. Gorgas worked against mosquitoes was spraying oil on the grass in ditches. The oil would kill *larvae*, or baby mosquitoes, after they hatched from eggs laid on the surface of standing water.

photo courtesy University of Florida
George A. Smathers Libraries

A tiny insect threatens a huge project

Dr. Gorgas attacked the mosquito problem in several ways:

- draining ponds and swamps
- using mosquito netting
- **fumigating**, or using fumes of certain chemicals to repel insects
- **quarantining** (KWOR-an-teen-ing), or isolating, people who were sick.

In just one year, the number of deaths from malaria and yellow fever was greatly reduced.

One worker, Alfred E. Dottin, wrote:

“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.”



photo courtesy James Gathany/CDC

Ready Resources



The Mini Page provides ideas for websites, books or other resources that will help you learn more about this week's topics.

On the Web:

- bit.ly/1vYWHYW
- bit.ly/1oH78QX
- bit.ly/1qejgWY

At the library:

- “The Panama Canal” by Peter Benoit
- “Building the Panama Canal” by Sabrina Crewe
- “Silver People: Voices From the Panama Canal” by Margarita Engle



Try
'n'
Find

Panama Canal

W	B	N	P	E	N	I	T	N	A	R	A	U	Q	D
P	I	H	S	A	X	M	A	L	A	R	I	A	V	I
L	A	K	E	V	N	P	O	I	S	T	H	M	U	S
Y	T	A	E	R	T	A	A	S	B	L	O	C	K	E
A	M	A	N	A	P	H	M	N	Q	M	A	B	M	A
D	A	O	R	L	I	A	R	A	S	U	O	N	J	S
K	E	T	A	G	I	M	U	F	X	I	I	L	A	E
L	A	I	N	N	E	T	N	E	C	Y	O	T	O	C
Z	D	L	N	O	I	T	C	U	R	T	S	N	O	C

Words that remind us of the Panama Canal are hidden in the block above. Some words are hidden backward or diagonally, and some letters are used twice. See if you can find: CANAL, CENTENNIAL, COLOMBIA, CONSTRUCTION, DISEASE, EXPANSION, FUMIGATE, ISTHMIUS, LAKE, LARVAE, LOCK, MALARIA, MOSQUITO, PANAMA, PANAMAX, QUARANTINE, RAILROAD, SHIP, TREATY.



Mini Spy

Mini Spy and her friends are visiting the Panama Canal! See if you can find: cat bell whale ladder

- heart peanut word MINI sailboat
 ruler chicken toothbrush high heel shoe
 snake muffin umbrella question mark
 key needle number 2 exclamation mark
 saw teapot number 7



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Rookie Cookie's Recipe Soba Noodles With Edamame

You'll need:

- 8 ounces soba noodles
- 1 cup shelled edamame (soybeans)
- 2 tablespoons chopped cilantro
- 2 tablespoons reduced-sodium soy sauce
- 2 teaspoons toasted sesame oil

What to do:

1. Cook the noodles according to package directions. Drain and transfer to a large bowl.
2. Add the remaining ingredients and mix well.
3. Refrigerate until ready to serve or pack for lunch. Serves 4.

You will need an adult's help with this recipe.

Adapted from "The Robin Takes 5 Cookbook for Busy Families" with permission from Andrews McMeel Publishing (andrewsmcmeel.com).

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Meet Jess Harnell



photo by Rick Rowell, courtesy Disney XD

Jess Harnell is the voice of Grim Gloom in the Disney animated comedy series "The 7D," set in the world of the Seven Dwarfs. It airs on Disney XD, the Disney Channel and Disney Junior.

Jess specializes in being a voice actor. He is the voice of Cedric in the Disney Junior series "Sofia the First" and the voice of Chilly in the Disney Junior series "Doc McStuffins."

He has been a voice actor in many movies, including "Finding Nemo," "Up," the "Toy Story" movies, the "Cars" movies and the "Transformers" movies. He has also been a voice actor in many commercials and on TV shows, including "The Simpsons" and "Animaniacs." He is the announcer for "America's Funniest Home Videos."

He was the lead singer in the rock band Rock Sugar. He can impersonate the voices of more than 150 celebrities.

Jess, 50, was born in Teaneck, New Jersey, and moved to Los Angeles when he was 10.

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Gus
Goodsport's
Supersport



Height: 6-0
Birthdate:
2-11-1994
Hometown:
Marietta,
Georgia

Dansby Swanson

from The Mini Page © 2014 Universal Uclick

In baseball, middle infielders form the heart of a team's defense, turning double plays and limiting opponents' chances to score runs. And Dansby Swanson, a second baseman for the Vanderbilt Commodores, plays his heart out for his team.

Dansby was named the Most Outstanding Player at this year's College World Series in Omaha, Nebraska, after leading his Commodores to the NCAA Division I National Championship. Over six games, he batted .323, scored five runs, drove in two runs, stole three bases and played error-free ball at second base.

Vanderbilt's 3-2 victory over the University of Virginia in Game 3 of the finals gave the school its first-ever national championship in a men's sport. "When you've got guys backing up each other like we do," Swanson said after the game, "anything is possible."



Mighty Funny's Mini Jokes

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All the following jokes have something in common. Can you guess the common theme or category?

Ian: How can a broken pizza be fixed?

Jamie: With tomato paste!



David: What happens if you cross a tomato, some cheese and a mail carrier?

Anjan: A pizza that delivers itself!



Parker: What would you get if you stacked up thousands of pizzas?

Brad: The Leaning Tower of Pizzas!



A Modern Marvel

Building the canal

As construction got underway again, President Theodore Roosevelt assigned the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to take over. In 1909, workers began building the locks.

What is a lock?

Locks are machines that raise and lower ships between different levels of water.

For instance, if a boat is going from a river into a lake and the river is higher than the lake, the boat will steer into a lock. The lock will slowly release water until the boat is at the lake level, and then the boat will exit the other side into the lake.



From the Atlantic Ocean, ships enter the Panama Canal through the Gatun Locks. They travel over Gatun Lake, a manmade lake built for the canal, then exit through the Pedro Miguel and Miraflores Locks into the Pacific Ocean.

Next week, The Mini Page shares award-winning books with readers.

Returning to Panama

In 1977, the United States and Panama signed a **treaty**, or agreement, that ownership and management of the canal would permanently transfer to Panama on Dec. 31, 1999.



Flag of Panama



photo courtesy Panama Canal Authority

Work is underway on one of the new locks at the Atlantic Ocean entrance of the Panama Canal. The expansion is expected to be complete in early 2016.

The Panama Canal today

As ships have become bigger and traffic has increased, the canal has been improved and changed. In September 2007, the Panama Canal Expansion Program began. The work includes:

- building two new locks, one at each entrance
- carving out new channels to the locks and widening and deepening the existing channels
- raising the water level of Gatun Lake.

Panama Canal facts

- About 40 ships pass through the canal every day.
- It takes a ship eight to 10 hours to move through the canal. About three of those hours are spent passing through the locks.
- “Panamax” refers to the size limits for ships passing through the canal. The existing locks are 110 feet wide and 1,050 feet long. Panamax ships must be no wider than 107 feet and no longer than 965 feet.



photo by Dozenist

This ship barely fits through the existing Miraflores Locks. New locks will allow even larger ships to pass through the canal.

- When the expansion of the Panama Canal is complete, “New Panamax” ships will be able to move through the canal. They will have a maximum width of 161 feet and a maximum length of 1,200 feet.

- On Sept. 4, 2010, the *Fortune Plum* became the 1 millionth ship to transit the canal.



The Fortune Plum

The Mini Page Staff

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