Collection Summary

Title: John Bigelow Papers
Span Dates: 1492-1936
Bulk Dates: (bulk 1866-1936)
ID No.: MSS12724
Creator: Bigelow, John, 1854-1936
Extent: 25,000 items ; 76 containers plus 2 oversize ; 30.4 linear feet
Language: Collection material in English with French, German, Italian, and Spanish
Location: Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.
Summary: Army officer, professor, and author. Correspondence, research notes, manuscripts of articles and books, photostatic copies of manuscripts in foreign archives, bibliographical material, photographs, drawings, maps, clippings, card files, and printed matter relating largely to canals especially, the Panama and Suez canals, along with the early history of Latin America, and also including material on the American Revolution, Civil War, Robert E. Lee, Monroe Doctrine, military education, and American foreign policy.

Selected Search Terms

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the Library's online catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically therein.

People
Bigelow, John, 1854-1936.

Organizations
Massachusetts. Militia.

Subjects
Canals--Rates and tolls.
Canals.
History, Ancient.
International law.
Military education.
Military history.
Military policy.
Monroe doctrine.
Saratoga Campaign, N.Y., 1777.
World War, 1914-1918.

Places
Eastern Hemisphere--Maps.
Egypt--History.
Great Britain--Foreign relations--United States.
Latin America--History.
New York (State)--History--Revolution, 1775-1783.
Nicaragua Canal (Nicaragua)
Panama Canal (Panama)
Panama--History--To 1903.
Saint Lawrence Seaway.
Suez Canal (Egypt)
Tehuantepec Canal (Mexico)
Administrative Information

Provenance
The papers of John Bigelow, army officer, professor, and author, were given to the Library of Congress by Mrs. John Bigelow in 1942 and by Mrs. Thomas H. Ellett from 1949 to 1951.

Processing History
The collection was processed circa 1951. The finding aid was revised in 2011.

Additional Guides

Transfers
Maps have been transferred to the Library's Geography and Map Division where they are identified as part of these papers.

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The status of copyright in the unpublished writings of John Bigelow is governed by the Copyright Law of the United States (Title 17, U.S.C.).

Access and Restrictions
The papers of John Bigelow are open to research. Researchers are advised to contact the Manuscript Reading Room prior to visiting. Many collections are stored off-site and advance notice is needed to retrieve these items for research use.

Preferred Citation
Researchers wishing to cite this collection should include the following information: Container number, John Bigelow Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Biographical Note

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tr>
<td>1854, May 12</td>
<td>Born, New York, N.Y.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1877</td>
<td>Graduated United States Military Academy, West Point, N.Y.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1877-circa 1891</td>
<td>Served with Ninth and Tenth Cavalry regiments in the American West</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Event/Note</td>
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<tr>
<td>1883</td>
<td>Married Mary Braxton Dallam (died circa 1941)</td>
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<tr>
<td>1891</td>
<td>Published <em>Principles of Strategy: Illustrated Mainly from American Campaigns</em>. London: T. Fisher Unwin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1894-1898</td>
<td>Professor of military science, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, Mass.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1898-1903</td>
<td>Served in the Spanish-American War with Tenth Cavalry Regiment; wounded four times in attack on San Juan Hill and awarded Silver Star during Spanish-American War; later investigated Spanish war claims</td>
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<tr>
<td>1904</td>
<td>Superintendent, Yosemite National Park, California</td>
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<tr>
<td>1905-1910</td>
<td>Retired from army</td>
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<tr>
<td>1906-1909</td>
<td>Professor of French, Massachusetts Institute of Technology</td>
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<tr>
<td>1910</td>
<td>Served in Adjutant General’s Office, Massachusetts Volunteer Militia</td>
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<tr>
<td>1914</td>
<td>Published <em>The Campaign at Chancellorsville</em>. New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press</td>
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<td>1917</td>
<td>Published <em>World Peace: How War Cannot Be Abolished; How It May Be Abolished</em>. New York: Mitchell Kennerley</td>
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<tr>
<td>1917-1918</td>
<td>Professor of military science, Rutgers College, New Brunswick, N.J.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1918-1919</td>
<td>Recalled to active duty and assigned to history branch of general staff, War Department, Washington, D.C.</td>
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<tr>
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<td>1936, Feb. 29</td>
<td>Died, Washington, D.C.</td>
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**Scope and Content Note**

The papers of John Bigelow (1854-1936) span the years 1492-1936, with the bulk of the collection dating from 1866 to 1936. The collection was organized as received and material relating to a single topic is dispersed throughout the papers. Many items in the collection, including notes taken by Bigelow, are in French, German, Italian, and Spanish as well as in English. The papers are organized into the following series: [Series I], [Series II], [Series III], and [Oversize].
Series I contains material on the Panama and Suez canals mostly under subheadings that Bigelow titled "Panama Canal file" and "Suez Canal file." Both files are organized into an alphabetical subject file filled with notes, books, pamphlets, photostatic copies of manuscripts in foreign archives, clippings, and maps, and a chronological correspondence file containing copies of historical letters as well as research letters sent and received. There is also a large number of maps of the Old and New Worlds. Other topics of interest include the choice of routes for the Panama Canal, tolls, the Nicaraguan Canal and Tehuantepec Canal, and the minutes of the Isthmian Canal Commission. Material relating to the early history of civilization, the Panama Canal, and other canals is supplemented by card files in Series II.

A manuscript copy of Bigelow's "Suez Canal-Panama Canal" appears in Series I with a second manuscript containing appendices appearing in Series II. Also relating to Panama is an abstract from the diary of Bigelow's father and diplomat, John Bigelow (1817-1911). Bigelow's article, "The So-called Bartholomew Columbus Map of 1506," is also split between Series I and Series II. Correspondence relating to his book Principles of Strategy: Illustrated Mainly from American Campaigns appears in both Series I and Series III, while correspondence relating to Breaches of Anglo-American Treaties is in Series I.

Series I also contains research material on American subjects such as the Saratoga Campaign in New York during the Revolutionary War, the Constitution, the Civil War, relations with Great Britain, the Monroe Doctrine, and westward expansion. Other topics include Egypt, the St. Lawrence Seaway, and international law. A card file related to the Saratoga Campaign is located in Series III.

Series II contains correspondence, manuscripts, and notes related to Bigelow's writings including The Campaign at Chancellorsville, "The Russo-German War: A Military Sketch," "How Theodore Roosevelt Took Panama," and "Alabama Claims." Included also are subject files on Central America, international law, origin of the name America, and World War I. Also of interest is the correspondence of the Nicaraguan Canal Commission.

Series III contains manuscripts, correspondence, and notes regarding Bigelow's work on Robert E. Lee, his book Mars-la-Tour and Gravelotte, and a proposed biography of St. Christopher. Also of interest are the bibliographies of Panama Canal records from 1857 to 1932, an index to the maps collected by Bigelow, bibliographies on other topics, and papers and correspondence relating to Bigelow's service in the Massachusetts Volunteer Militia.

Arrangement of the Papers

This collection is arranged in four series:

- **Series I**, 1775-1934
- **Series II**, 1492-1914
- **Series III**, 1775-1933
- **Oversize**, 1823-1907
# Description of Series

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<tr>
<td>BOX 1-53</td>
<td>Series I, 1775-1934</td>
<td>Correspondence, research notes, photostatic copies of manuscripts from various archives throughout Europe, manuscripts of books and articles, maps, clippings, photographs, drawings, diary abstract, and printed matter. Arranged as received.</td>
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Bollettino della Società Geografica Italiana, Feb. 1880

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<p>| BOX 47    | (1 folder) |</p>
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<td>Johnson, Emory R., <em>Panama Traffic and Tolls</em>, statement, 1912</td>
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Correspondence, research notes, photostatic copies of manuscripts from various archives throughout Europe, manuscripts of books and articles, card files, maps, clippings, and printed matter.  
Arranged as received |
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| BOX 64    | Card file  
Early history of civilization and Panama Canal |
**Container** | **Contents**
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**BOX 65** | Canals

**BOX 66-76** | **Series III, 1775-1936**
Correspondence, research notes, photostatic copies of manuscripts from various archives throughout Europe, manuscripts of books and articles, card file, maps, clippings, printed matter, and bibliographical material.
Arranged as received.

**BOX 66** | Index of maps
Ptolemy, Claudius
  - Article and book regarding
  - Research notes and photostatic copies
    - (8 folders)

**BOX 67** | Mars-la-Tour and Gravelotte
  - Lecture notes
  - Notes and correspondence
  - Text
St. Christopher, notes and photographs for a biography

**BOX 68** | Lee, Robert E.
  - Manuscripts, circa 1936
    - (3 folders)
  - Research notes
    - Chronological, 1775-1935
      - (6 folders)

**BOX 69** | Miscellaneous
  - Army regulations

**BOX 70** | Principles of Strategy, correspondence, 1890-1892
  - (2 folders)
  - Miscellaneous notes and correspondence
    - Civil War
    - El Alish and Convention of Cintra
    - Falkland Islands
    - Military education
    - Revolutionary War records
    - Western posts

**BOX 71** | Di Alcuni Lavori Ed Acquisti Della Biblioteca Vaticana, 1892
  - Miscellaneous book lists and notes
  - Notebook

**BOX 72** | Bibliographies of Panama Canal records, 1857-1932
  - (2 folders)
  - Bulletin du Canal Interocéanique, 1888
  - Landings in Panama, 1848-1904
  - Notes regarding books

**BOX 73** | Panama Canal
  - Clippings and notes
  - Printed matter
<table>
<thead>
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| BOX 74    | Bigelow, Jane Poultney, correspondence, 1913  
Massachusetts Volunteer Militia, correspondence and papers, 1906-1909  
Miscellaneous material  
  - Clippings, notes, and printed matter, circa 1896-circa 1935  
  - Maps and notes  
  - Notes on army regulations  
  - Paper money from Italy  
  - Photographs and postcards, circa 1913  
Unpublished essays |
| BOX 75    | Card file, Saratoga Campaign catalogue |
| BOX 76    | Civil War, correspondence and papers, 1862-1863  
Panama Canal, correspondence, 1931  
World War I  
Miscellaneous material  
  - Map of New York state, 1823  
  See Oversize  
Notes on books  
Photostatic copies  
Saratoga Campaign clippings |
| BOX OV1-OV2 | Oversize, 1823-1907  
Maps.  
Arranged and described according to the series, containers, and folders from which the items were removed. |
| BOX OV 1  | Series I  
  Mappamondo Catalano della Estense, 1907 (Container 2) |
| BOX OV 2  | Series III  
  Map of New York state, 1823 (Container 76) |