

Joseph Cowles Mehaffey Papers
A Finding Aid to the Collection in the Library of Congress



Manuscript Division, Library of Congress
Washington, D.C.
2012

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

Catalog Record: <https://lcn.loc.gov/mm73047332>

Additional search options available at: <https://hdl.loc.gov/loc.mss/eadmss.ms012161>

Prepared by Don Schewe

Finding aid encoded by Library of Congress Manuscript Division, 2012

Collection Summary

Title: Joseph Cowles Mehaffey Papers

Span Dates: 1925-1959

Bulk Dates: (bulk 1944-1949)

ID No.: MSS47332

Creator: Mehaffey, Joseph Cowles, 1889-1963

Extent: 900 items

Extent: 3 containers

Extent: 1.2 linear feet

Language: Collection material in English

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

LC Catalog record: <https://lccn.loc.gov/mm73047332>

Summary: U.S. Army engineer and governor of the Panama Canal Zone. Personal correspondence relating primarily to life in the Canal Zone and the operation of the Panama Canal and material concerning Mehaffey's various engineering projects, including the Arlington Memorial Bridge and renovation of the White House.

Selected Search Terms

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the LC Catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically.

People

Mehaffey, Joseph Cowles, 1889-1963.

Organizations

Panama Railroad Co.

White House (Washington, D.C.)

Subjects

Bridges--Potomac River.

Canals--Panama.

Civil engineering.

Public buildings--Washington (D.C.)

Railroads--Panama.

Places

Arlington Memorial Bridge (Va.)

Canal Zone--History.

Canal Zone--Social life and customs.

Central America--History.

Panama Canal (Panama)

Panama--History.

Occupations

Engineers.

Governors--Canal Zone.

Provenance

The papers of Joseph Cowles Mehaffey, U.S. army officer and governor of the Panama Canal Zone, were given to the Library of Congress by Harry N. Burgess in 1971.

Processing History

The papers of Joseph Cowles Mehaffey were arranged and described in 1972 and 1977. The finding aid was revised in 2012.

Transfers

Photographs have been transferred to the Library's Prints and Photographs Division where they are identified as part of the Joseph Cowles Mehaffey Papers.

Copyright Status

The status of copyright in the unpublished writings of Joseph Cowles Mehaffey is governed by the Copyright Law of the United States (Title 17, U.S.C.).

Access and Restrictions

The papers of Joseph Cowles Mehaffey 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, Joseph Cowles Mehaffey Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Biographical Note

Date	Event
1889, Nov. 20	Born, Lima, Ohio
1911	Graduated, United States Military Academy, West Point, N.Y.
1925-1930	Executive assistant, Arlington Memorial Bridge project
1930-1933	Assistant engineer of maintenance, Panama Canal
1935-1938	Executive assistant to the chief engineer, WPA
1941-1944	Engineer of maintenance, Panama Canal
1944-1948	Governor, Panama Canal Zone
1963, Feb. 18	Died, Cincinnati, Ohio

Scope and Content Note

The papers of Joseph Cowles Mehaffey (1889-1963) span the period 1925-1959, with the bulk of the material concentrated in the period 1944-1949. The papers consist of correspondence, printed matter, and miscellaneous material. Correspondence is largely personal in nature, containing a large number of congratulatory letters on promotions and appointments. It also contains information on life in the Canal Zone and the operation of the Panama Canal.

The printed matter consists of newspaper clippings, magazine articles, pamphlets on Panama and Central America, reports of the Panama Rail Road Company, and congressional documents relating to the Panama Canal. The newspaper clippings and magazine articles relate largely to the Panama Canal, but also contain some articles about Mehaffey.

Notes by Mehaffey in a miscellany file relate to the Panama Canal, Washington, D.C., engineering projects such as the Arlington Memorial Bridge and renovation of the White House, and personal and speech material.

Arrangement of the Papers

This collection is arranged by type of material.

Container List

Container	Contents
BOX 1	Correspondence
BOX 1	1925
BOX 1	1929-1933
BOX 1	1942
BOX 1	1944-1951
BOX 1	1955
BOX 1	1959
BOX 1	Undated
BOX 2	Printed matter
BOX 2	Newspaper clippings
BOX 2	Magazine articles
BOX 2	Pamphlets on Panama and Central America
BOX 2	Congressional documents relating to the Panama Canal
BOX 2	Reports of the Panama Rail Road Co.
BOX 3	Miscellany
BOX 3	Notes
BOX 3	Washington, D.C.
BOX 3	White House
BOX 3	Arlington Memorial Bridge
BOX 3	Panama Canal
BOX 3	Notes for speeches
BOX 3	Driver's licenses, identification cards, payroll slips, etc.