

Guide to the William Crawford Gorgas Papers, 1868-1952

- Title:** William Crawford Gorgas Papers, 1868-1952
- Creator:** Gorgas, William Crawford, 1854-1920
- Extent:** 8.5 linear feet
- Inclusive Dates:** 1868-1952
- Collection Number:** MS0581
- Provenance:** Gift of Aileen Gorgas Wrightson, 1947 and 1952; Thomas W. Martin, 1952; Jessie Palfrey Leake, Minna Palfrey Tait, Aileen Gorgas Wrightson, Gene Palfrey Ellis, and William Gorgas Palfrey, 1958; Gorgas Memorial Institute of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene and National Library of Medicine, 1991; and Dr. William G. Palfrey and Gene Marie Palfrey Ellis, 1993.
- Processed by:** Donnelly Lancaster, 2004
- Restricted:** no
- Copyright Statement:** This collection may be protected under Title 17 of the U.S. Copyright Law.
- Preferred Citation:** The William Crawford Gorgas Papers, W.S. Hoole Special Collections Library, The University of Alabama.
- Reference Code:** USALM0581
- Language:** English, Spanish,

ABSTRACT

Correspondence, diaries, writings, and other material of this Alabama native who eradicated yellow fever from the Panama Canal Zone and served as Surgeon General of the U.S. Army

BIOGRAPHICAL/HISTORICAL NOTE

William Crawford Gorgas was born October 3, 1854, in Toulminville, Alabama, near Mobile. His father, Josiah Gorgas, was a native Pennsylvanian and an 1841 graduate of the United States Military Academy. Josiah Gorgas was an ordnance officer in the U.S. Army and commanded the Mount Vernon Arsenal, north of Mobile, Alabama, where he met and married Amelia Gayle in 1853. Amelia Gayle Gorgas was the daughter of former U.S. congressman and Alabama governor John Gayle. During the Civil War Josiah Gorgas joined the Confederate Army and rose to the rank of brigadier general and Chief of Ordnance.

In 1875 William Gorgas graduated from the University of the South at Sewanee, Tennessee, where his father was vice chancellor. He then entered Bellevue Hospital Medical College in New York, graduating in 1879. The same year his father was named president of The University of Alabama, a position he held for only one year due to illness.

William Gorgas joined the U.S. Army in 1880 as an assistant surgeon. Throughout the 1880s and 1890s Gorgas served with little notoriety in various posts around the United States, including North Dakota, Texas, and Florida. He married Marie Cook Doughty of Columbus, Ohio, on September 3, 1885. They had one child, Aileen.

Having survived yellow fever while stationed in Texas, Gorgas was often ordered to work in areas where yellow fever was a known hazard. Consequently he was stationed at Fort Barrancas, on Pensacola Bay, Florida, for a number of years, honing his skills and knowledge of the disease. During the Spanish-American War the Army gave Gorgas the command of a hospital in Cuba, where there was a yellow fever outbreak. A year later, in 1899, Gorgas was appointed chief sanitary officer of Havana, Cuba, where he eradicated yellow fever by controlling the mosquito population.

As a result of his success in Cuba, Gorgas was reassigned to Washington, D.C., in 1902 to develop sanitation plans for the proposed work on the Panama Canal. Gorgas arrived in Panama in 1904 and began efforts to eradicate disease in the Canal Zone. Despite internal opposition to his work, Gorgas managed to eradicate yellow fever from the Canal Zone and created a sanitary environment for workers and residents. By this time, Gorgas received international recognition for his skills and knowledge of sanitation and disease prevention, acting as consultant to other countries including South Africa.

He was appointed Surgeon General of the Army on January 16, 1914, and promoted to the rank of major general. Gorgas served in this capacity during World War I and retired on October 3, 1918. He continued his work on disease prevention and served on the International Health Board, which took him to England in 1920. While there he suffered a stroke and died on July 3, 1920. After a funeral at St. Paul's Cathedral, Gorgas's body was returned to the United States and buried in Arlington National Cemetery.

Sources:

Gibson, John M., with an introduction by Sarah Woolfolk Wiggins *Physician to the World. The Life of General William C. Gorgas* (Tuscaloosa: The University of Alabama Press, 1989); The William Crawford Gorgas Papers, W.S. Hoole Special Collections Library, The University of Alabama; and The Gorgas Family Papers, W.S. Hoole Special Collections Library, The University of Alabama.

SCOPE AND CONTENTS NOTE

The William Crawford Gorgas Papers include material created by and written about Gorgas, as well as material created by Gorgas' family members. His diaries and journals illuminate his life and work for the U.S. Army as a surgeon and span the years he worked in Cuba and Panama. The collection includes official reports and other documents Gorgas wrote and collected, as well as articles and other publications written about Gorgas and his work in sanitation and disease prevention, particularly yellow fever. Correspondence, articles, and other items document the numerous awards and tributes Gorgas received during his life and memorials after his death in 1920. In addition to William Crawford Gorgas material, the collection includes other material belonging to Gorgas family members including Marie Gorgas and their daughter, Aileen Gorgas Wrightson. In 1924, his widow Marie Gorgas published *William Crawford Gorgas: His Life and Work*. This collection includes manuscripts, galley proofs, and published versions of her work.

The collection is arranged into the following series: Diaries and Journals; Correspondence; Personal Material; U.S. Army Work; Professional Affiliations; Speeches and Writings; Published Material; Honors and Memorials; Gorgas Family; Manuscripts about the Life of William Crawford Gorgas; Clippings; Miscellany; and Photographs.

SERIES DESCRIPTIONS:

SERIES: DIARIES AND JOURNALS

Contains five bound diaries Gorgas wrote from 1899 – 1919. The series also contains typescript journal entries dated 1905 – 1920, some of which Marie Gorgas used in her work *William Crawford Gorgas: His Life and Work*.

SERIES: CORRESPONDENCE

Contains both outgoing and incoming correspondence. The outgoing correspondence spans the years 1884-1920. Incoming correspondence comprises the bulk of the series. Christmas cards and invitations are also included in this series.

SERIES: PERSONAL MATERIAL

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Contains Gorgas's baptismal certificate, grade reports, Book of Common Prayer, and account books dated 1877, 1879, 1910-1914, and 1915-1916

SERIES: U.S ARMY WORK

Contains Gorgas's Army orders, 1898-1918, and promotion material. Also contains reports, satirical works, and other material relating to Gorgas's work in Cuba, Panama, and South Africa.

SERIES: PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

Contains material relating to Gorgas's involvement and work for professional organizations including the American Medical Association, of which he served as president, and the Rockefeller Foundation.

SERIES: SPEECHES AND WRITINGS

Contains reports and other unpublished documents, typescript and handwritten speeches delivered by Gorgas, ca. 1900-1920, and unidentified writings

SERIES: PUBLISHED MATERIAL

Contains material that Gorgas wrote and collected, as well as material his family collected. The bulk of the series contains published material about Gorgas and his work and material that Gorgas collected about disease, sanitation, and areas where he worked, including Cuba and Panama.

SERIES: HONORS AND MEMORIALS

Contains certificates, medals, and other material related to awards and honors Gorgas received during his lifetime, as well as memorials to Gorgas after his death in 1920

SERIES: GORGAS FAMILY

Contains correspondence and other documents relating to the Gorgas family and Gorgas's wife, Marie Gorgas, and daughter, Aileen Gorgas Wrightson.

SERIES: MANUSCRIPTS ABOUT LIFE OF WILLIAM C. GORGAS

Contains manuscripts and galley proofs of Marie Gorgas's 1924 publication, *William Crawford Gorgas: His Life and Work*, as well as manuscripts for a work by Ruth Gordon and additional unidentified manuscripts.

SERIES: CLIPPINGS

Contains newspaper clippings about Gorgas, dated 1900-1952, as well as miscellaneous clippings kept by Gorgas and his family

SERIES: MISCELLANY

Contains correspondence to Army veteran Leonard Wood and Colonel and Mrs. W.J. Lyster and other miscellaneous material.

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SERIES: PHOTOGRAPHS

Contains photographs of Fort Riley, Kansas, stereoptical photographs of Italy, photographs depicting sanitation workers, and photographs of William C. Gorgas.

CONTAINER LIST

CONTAINER LIST

SERIES: DIARIES AND JOURNALS

Box Folder Description

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|-----|---|---|
| 685 | 1 | Diary, February 1899 - August 1899 |
| | 2 | Diary, August 1899 - November 1899 |
| | 3 | Diary, August ca. 1900 |
| | 4 | Diary, September 1918 - October 1918 |
| | 5 | Diary, June 1919 - November 1919 |
| | 6 | Miscellaneous Diary Extracts by William C. and Marie Gorgas |
| | 7 | Journal, January to March 1905 [typescript copy used by Marie Gorgas to write <i>William Crawford Gorgas: His Life and Work</i>]. |
| | 8 | Journal, Miscellaneous Entries 1905-1908 [typescript copy used by Marie Gorgas to write <i>William Crawford Gorgas: His Life and Work</i>] |
| | 9 | Journal, 1916 [typescript copy] |

Box Folder Description

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|-----|---|---|
| 686 | 1 | Journal from trip to France with Secretary Baker – 1918 [typescript copy] |
| | 2 | Journal, 1919 [partial, typescript copy] |
| | 3 | Journal, 1920 [partial, typescript copy] |
| | 4 | Journal, Miscellaneous Years [typescript copy] |

SERIES: CORRESPONDENCE

Box Folder Description

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|-----|---|---|
| 686 | 5 | Outgoing Family Correspondence, 1869 – 1893 |
| | 6 | Outgoing Family Correspondence, 1894 – 1902 |
| | 7 | Outgoing Family Correspondence, 1903 – 1912 |
| | 8 | Outgoing Family Correspondence, 1913 – 1920 |
| | 9 | Incoming Family Correspondence A to Z |

Box Folder Description

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|-----|---|--|
| 687 | 1 | Outgoing Correspondence, 1884 – March 1904 |
| | 2 | Outgoing Correspondence, March – December 1904 |
| | 3 | Outgoing Correspondence, January – May 1905 |
| | 4 | Outgoing Correspondence, June 1905 – 1908 |
| | 5 | Outgoing Correspondence, 1909 – 1910 |
| | 6 | Outgoing Correspondence, 1911 – 1912 |
| | 7 | Outgoing Correspondence, 1913 – 1914 |

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Box Folder Description

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|-----|----|--|
| 688 | 1 | Outgoing Correspondence, 1915 – 1917 |
| | 2 | Outgoing Correspondence, 1918 – 1920 |
| | 3 | Outgoing Correspondence, undated |
| | 3A | Copies of Outgoing, 1879 & 1905 |
| | 4 | Incoming Correspondence, Abbot, Henry to Birmingham, Thos. |
| | 5 | Incoming Correspondence, Blackburn, J. C. S. to Carroll, James |
| | 6 | Incoming Correspondence, Carter, H. R. to Cushing, Harvey |
| | 7 | Incoming Correspondence, Daigenault, William H. to Furbush, C.L. |
| | 8 | Incoming Correspondence, Gailor, Thomas H. to Guiteras, Juan |

Box Folder Description

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| 689 | 1 | Incoming Correspondence, Hale, Albert to Huddleston, J. H. |
| | 2 | Incoming Correspondence, Ingoldsby, Frank S. to Kean, Jefferson R. |
| | 3 | Incoming Correspondence, Keen, W. W. to LaGarde, Louis A. |
| | 4 | Incoming Correspondence, Lambert, Alexander to Mason, Charles F. |
| | 5 | Incoming Correspondence, Maxwell, Thomas to Owens, Clarence J. |
| | 6 | Incoming Correspondence, Parker, Charles to Public Ledger |
| | 7 | Incoming Correspondence, Ralsey, E. L. to Rittenhouse, E. E. |

Box Folder Description

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| 690 | 1 | Incoming Correspondence, Rixey, P. M. to Rosendo, Jose |
| | 2 | Incoming Correspondence, Ross, John W. to Ross, Sir Ronald |
| | 3 | Incoming Correspondence, Sackett, Emma L. to Swan, John M. |
| | 4 | Incoming Correspondence, Taft, Frances to Verue, Samuel |
| | 5 | Incoming Correspondence, Wakefield, Harry H. to Wood, Leonard |
| | 6 | Incoming Correspondence, Wood, Robert E. to Young, Willard |
| | 7 | Incoming Correspondence, Unidentifiable Names |
| | 8 | Christmas Carols and Invitations sent to General and Mrs. Gorgas |

SERIES: PERSONAL MATERIAL

Box Folder Description

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|-----|---|---------------------------|
| 691 | 1 | Account Book, 1877 |
| | 2 | Account Book, 1879 |
| | 3 | Account Book, 1910 – 1914 |
| | 4 | Account Book, 1915 – 1916 |
| | 5 | Baptism Certificate |
| | 6 | Report Cards |
| | 7 | Book of Common Prayer |
| | 8 | Mexican Rincon Mining Co. |

SERIES: U.S. ARMY WORK

Box Folder Description

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691	9	Army Orders, 1898 - 1918
	10	Army Promotions
	11	Cuba
	12	Panama, Humor and Satire
	13	Panama, Memos and Reports
	14	Panama, Miscellaneous
	15	South Africa

SERIES: PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

Box	Folder	Description
691	16	American Medical Association
	17	Rockefeller Foundation
	18	Other Organizations

SERIES: SPEECHES AND WRITINGS

Box	Folder	Description
692	1	Speeches, 1903 – 1912
	2	Speeches, 1912 – 1915
	3	Speeches, 1915 – 1917
	4	Speeches, Undated
	5	Speeches, Drafts
	6	Articles, Drafts and Final Copies
	7	Writings, Cuba
	8	Writings, Panama
	9	Writings, South Africa
	10	Writings, Surgeon General
	11	Drafts (1 of 2)
	12	Drafts (2 of 2)
	13	Unidentified writings, Cuba
	14	Unidentified writings, Panama
	15	Unidentified writings, Disease
	16	Unidentified writings
	17	Writings, Yellow Fever

SERIES: PUBLISHED MATERIAL

SUB-SERIES: Published Material, by W.C. Gorgas

Box	Folder	Description
693	1	Publications (1 of 7)
	2	Publications (2 of 7)
	3	Publications (3 of 7)
	4	Publications (4 of 7)
	5	Publications (5 of 7)
	6	Publications (6 of 7)
	7	Publications (7 of 7)

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SUB-SERIES: Published Material, Non-Gorgas

Box	Folder	Description
693	8	About Gorgas, Panama (1 of 4)
	9	About Gorgas, Panama (2 of 4)

Box	Folder	Description
694	1	About Gorgas, Panama (3 of 4)
	2	About Gorgas, Panama (4 of 4)
	3	About Gorgas, Yellow Fever
	4	About Gorgas, Disease
	5	About Gorgas, WWI
	6	About Gorgas, South Africa
	7	About Gorgas, Personal
	8	About Gorgas, General
	9	About Gorgas, Death (1 of 2)
	10	About Gorgas, Death (2 of 2)

Box	Folder	Description
695	1	Gorgas, Miscellaneous (1 of 4)
	2	Gorgas, Miscellaneous (2 of 4)
	3	Gorgas, Miscellaneous (3 of 4)
	4	Gorgas, Miscellaneous (4 of 4)
	5	Books and Book reviews
	6	Panama (1 of 6)
	7	Panama (2 of 6)

Box	Folder	Description
696	1	Panama (3 of 6)
	2	Panama (4 of 6)
	3	Panama (5 of 6)
	4	Panama (6 of 6)
	5	Maps of Panama
	6	Cuba
	7	Yellow Fever (1 of 2)
	8	Yellow Fever (2 of 2)
	9	Disease
	10	Miscellaneous (1 of 4)

Box	Folder	Description
697	1	Miscellaneous (2 of 4)
	2	Miscellaneous (3 of 4)
	3	Miscellaneous (4 of 4)

SERIES: HONORS AND MEMORIALS

Box Folder Description

- 697 4 Awards, Memberships, and Honorary Degrees
- 5 Descriptions of Gorgas's Medals
- 6 Buchanan Medal, 1912

Box Folder Description

- 698 1 Bound and Autographed Menu from Dinner Honoring Gorgas, 1914
- 2 Nobel Prize Correspondence
- 3 Correspondence RE: Bronze Bust of Gorgas
- 4 New York University Hall of Fame, 1951
- 5 Tributes on 100th Anniversary of Gorgas's Birth, 1954
- 6 Speeches in Tribute of Gorgas
- 7 Posthumous Honors
- 8 Gorgas Memorial Institute (1 of 3)

Box Folder Description

- 699 1 Gorgas Memorial Institute (2 of 3)
- 2 Gorgas Memorial Institute (3 of 3)
- 3 Memorials (1 of 4)
- 4 Memorials (2 of 4)
- 5 Memorials (3 of 4)
- 6 Memorials (4 of 4)
- 7 Gorgas Memorial Essay Contest
- 8 W.C. Gorgas Scholarships

Box Folder Description

- 700 1 Telegrams Regarding Illness and Death
- 2 Miscellaneous Correspondence on Death of Gorgas (non-family)
- 3 Typed Copies of Articles on Death of Gorgas
- 4 Gorgas Funeral (1 of 2)
- 5 Gorgas Funeral (2 of 2)
- 6 Memories about Gorgas by Friends
- 7 Memoir about Gorgas by Colonel Ford

SERIES: GORGAS FAMILY

Box Folder Description

- 700 8 Marie Gorgas, Outgoing Correspondence
- 9 Marie Gorgas, Outgoing Correspondence, Miscellaneous
- 10 Marie Gorgas, Incoming Correspondence (before death of W.C. Gorgas)
- 11 Marie Gorgas, Incoming Correspondence (letters and condolences following death of W.C. Gorgas), A – H

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| 701 | 1 | Marie Gorgas, Incoming Correspondence (letters and condolences following death of W.C. Gorgas), I – S |
| | 2 | Marie Gorgas, Incoming Correspondence (letters and condolences following death of W.C. Gorgas), T – Z and unidentified |
| | 3 | Marie Gorgas, Incoming Correspondence, 1922 to 1928 |
| | 4 | Marie Gorgas, Incoming Correspondence, undated |
| | 5 | Marie Gorgas, Incoming Correspondence, unidentified |
| | 6 | Marie Gorgas, Miscellaneous |
| | 7 | Aileen Gorgas Wrightson, Incoming Correspondence |
| | 8 | Aileen Gorgas, Miscellaneous |
| | 9 | Miscellaneous Family Correspondence |
| | 10 | Richard H. Gorgas, Incoming Correspondence; Re: Death of W.C. Gorgas, 1920-1921 |

Box Folder Description

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| 702 | 1 | Unidentified partial letters |
| | 2 | Genealogical/Biographical Material on Gorgas Family |
| | 3 | Guide Book to Historic Germantown |
| | 4 | Miscellaneous |

SERIES: MANUSCRIPTS ON LIFE OF W.C. GORGAS

SUB-SERIES: *William Crawford Gorgas: His Life and Work*

Box Folder Description

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| 702 | 5 | Marie Gorgas, Typescript, Chapter 1, “Fort Brown Days” |
| | 6 | Marie Gorgas, Typescript, Chapter 2, “Ancestry” |

Box Folder Description

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| 703 | 1 | Marie Gorgas, Typescript, Chapter 3, “Frontier Life at Army Post” |
| | 2 | Marie Gorgas, Typescript, Chapter 4, “Fort Barrancas” |
| | 3 | Marie Gorgas, Typescript, Chapter 5, “From New York to Siboney” |
| | 4 | Marie Gorgas, Typescript, Chapter 6, “Havana” |

Box Folder Description

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| 704 | 1 | Marie Gorgas, Typescript, Chapter 7, “The Battle with the Jungle” |
| | 2 | Marie Gorgas, Typescript, Chapter 8, “Beginnings at Panama” |
| | 3 | Marie Gorgas, Typescript, Chapters 8 & 9, “Beginnings at Panama” and “Panama” |
| | 4 | Marie Gorgas, Typescript, Chapter 9, “Panama” |
| | 5 | Marie Gorgas, Typescript, Chapter 10, “Hospitals and Churches” |

Box Folder Description

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| 705 | 1 | Marie Gorgas, Typescript, Chapter 11, “Panama in Lighter Vein” |
| | 2 | Marie Gorgas, Typescript, Chapter 12, “Johannesburg” |

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- 3 Marie Gorgas, Typescript, Chapter 13, "Surgeon General and Journal"
- 4 Marie Gorgas, Typescript, Chapter 14, "The World War"
- 5 Marie Gorgas, Typescript, Chapter 15, "Second Journal"
- 6 Marie Gorgas, Typescript, Chapter 16, "Belgium and London"
- 7 Marie Gorgas, Manuscripts for *William Crawford Gorgas: His Life and Work*, Miscellaneous
- 8 Galley Proofs for *William Crawford Gorgas: His Life and Work*
- 9 Serialized Chapters from *William Crawford Gorgas: His Life and Work* (1 of 3)

Box Folder Description

- 706 1 Serialized Chapters from *William Crawford Gorgas: His Life and Work* (2 of 3)
- 2 Serialized Chapters from *William Crawford Gorgas: His Life and Work* (3 of 3)

SUB-SERIES: Other Works

Box Folder Description

- 706 3 Miscellaneous Anecdotes on Life of W.C. Gorgas
- 4 Typescript of Book on W.C. Gorgas, Author Unknown
- 5 Typed Manuscript of the Life of W.C. Gorgas, Ruth Gordon, Unpublished

SERIES: CLIPPINGS

Box Folder Description

- 707 1 Newspaper Clippings on W.C. Gorgas, 1900-1913
- 2 Newspaper Clippings on W.C. Gorgas, 1914-1917
- 3 Newspaper Clippings on W.C. Gorgas, 1918-1922

Box Folder Description

- 708 1 Newspaper Clippings, 1923-1952
- 2 Newspaper Clippings, Gorgas's Death, 1920
- 3 Newspaper Clippings, No Date

Box Folder Description

- 709 1 Newspaper Clippings, No Date
- 2 Newspaper Clippings, Miscellaneous
- 3 Newspaper Clippings, Miscellaneous
- 4 Newspaper Clippings, Miscellaneous

SERIES: MISCELLANY

Box Folder Description

- 709 5 Leonard Wood, Correspondence
- 6 Colonel W.J. Lyster and Mattie Lyster, Correspondence
- 7 Miscellaneous material

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8 Miscellaneous material

SERIES: PHOTOGRAPHS

Box	Folder	Description
5999	1	Stereoptical Photos of Italy, not dated
	2	Stereoptical Photos of Italy, not dated
	3	Fort Riley, Kansas, 1918
	4	Cuba and Panama, not dated