

# Panama: Isthmian Crossroads

1821-1898

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# Gran Colombia 1819-1831



# Timeline



## Gran Colombia, 1820-1830

- Bolivar's vision of a united South America.
- Present-day Colombia, Ecuador, Venezuela and Panama.
- Short-lived due to dissension amongst various factions.
- Bolivar resigned in 1828.
- In 1830, Bolivar's Gran Colombia divided into Colombia, Ecuador and Venezuela.



# Panama Congress: Chapter House of the Convent of the Franciscans



# Plaza Bolívar, Casco Viejo



# Gold Rush



# Forty-Niners



**FOR CALIFORNIA!**  
**BY DIRECT**  
**EXTRAORDINARY INDUCEMENTS!!**  
**THIRTY-FIVE DAYS TO GOLD REGIONS!**  
The "California Steam Navigation Co."  
**STEAMSHIP!**  
**NICARAGUA**  
On FRIDAY, MARCH 23d, 1849.  
**200 JACK ANNES!**  
The Quickest, Safest and Cheapest!!  
Price of Passage Through Ninety Dollars!

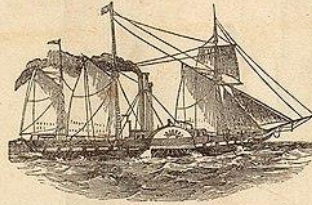


# Bond of the Accessory Transit Company (of Nicaragua), issued 30. November 1855



## THE ACCESSORY TRANSIT CO. (OF NICARAGUA.)

No. *1*



\$1,000.

ONE THOUSAND DOLLARS.

Acknowledge themselves to owe to CHARLES MORGAN AND GEORGE A. HOYT, or Bearer, ONE THOUSAND DOLLARS, which sum said Company promise to pay to the said Charles Morgan and George A. Hoyt, or to the holder hereof, at the Office of the Company in the City of New-York, on the thirty-first day of May, 1856, and also interest at the rate of 7 per cent. per annum.

And said Company further agree that this obligation, and all rights and benefits arising therefrom, may be transferred by delivery, as if the same were a Note of hand payable to bearer.

In Testimony whereof, and in pursuance of a Resolution of the Board of Directors, passed on the tenth day of November, 1855, the Corporate Seal of the Accessory Transit Company (of Nicaragua,) is hereto affixed, and these presents duly signed by the President and Secretary of said Company, at the City of New-York, this thirtieth day of November, 1855.

*Isaac C. Lee* Secretary.

*Thos. Lord* President.

We hereby Certify, that the ACCESSORY TRANSIT COMPANY (of Nicaragua,) have executed to us bills of sale of the Steam-Ships "NORTHERN LIGHT" and "STAR OF THE WEST," (and we hold policies of insurance upon the said ships for *One Hundred and Thirty Thousand Dollars*), as specified in the said instrument, in trust, for the benefit of the holders of the said Bonds, of similar tenor as the foregoing, issued and to be issued to an amount not exceeding in all, One Hundred and Twenty Thousand Dollars, with power to take possession of, and are directed to sell one or both of said ships after a default in paying the principal or interest of said Bonds, or any of them, and that the foregoing is one of the several Bonds secured by said bill of sale.

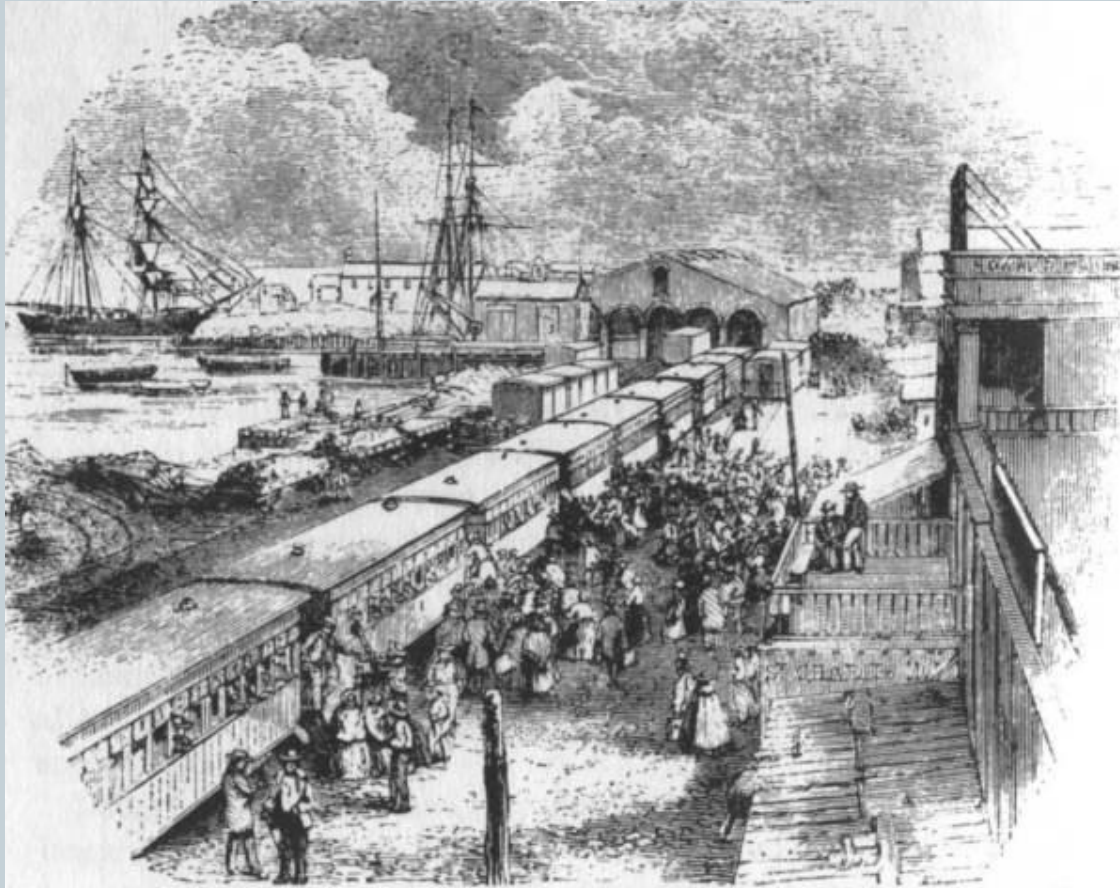
We are also authorized, in case of the loss of the said ships, to collect the amount insured and apply it to the payment of the Bonds.

*Charles Morgan*  
" "

*George Hoyt*



# Rails Across the Isthmus



*F. N. Otis, Illustrated History of the Panama Railroad, 1861*

**Train Loading at Aspinwall for Panama**

# Panama Railroad 1855



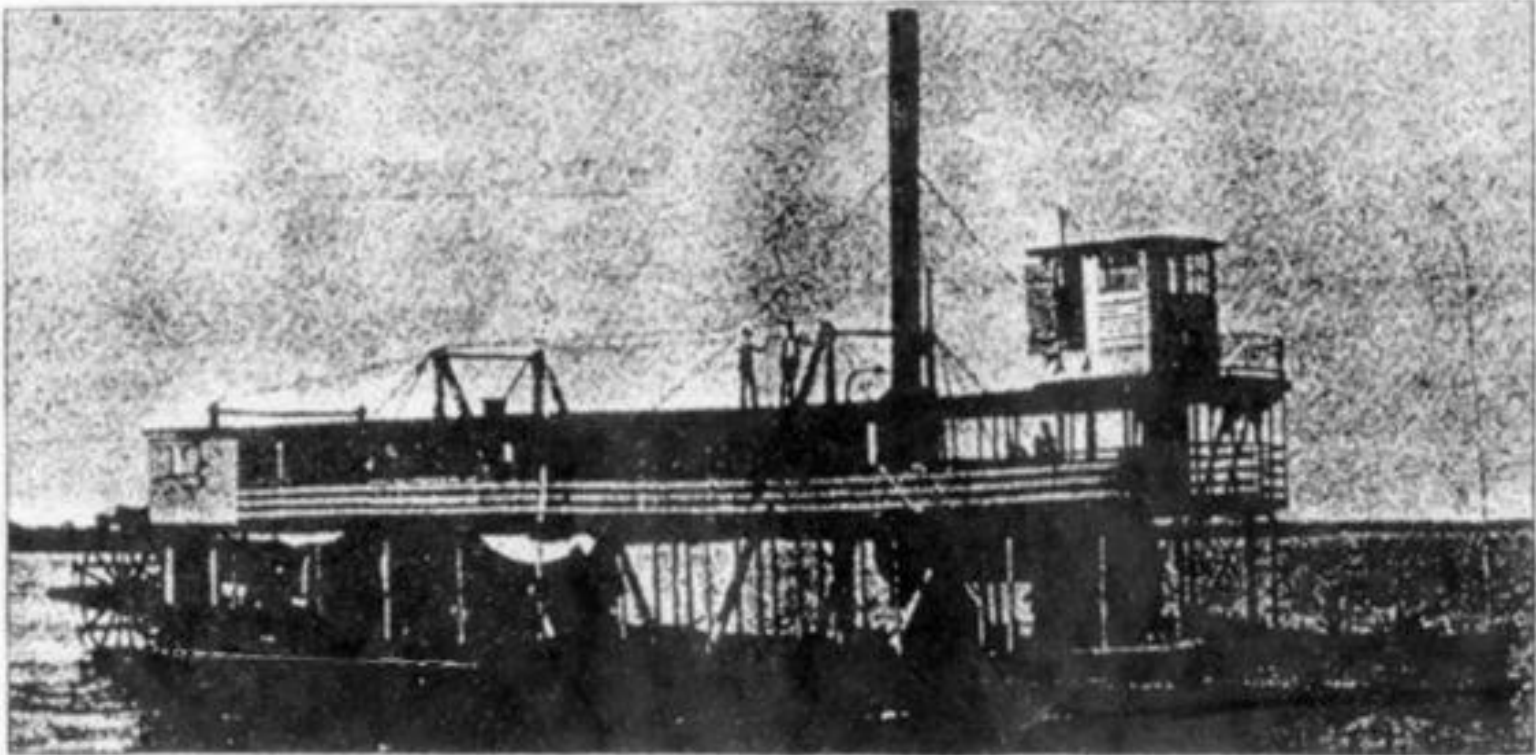
# Panama Railroad



# Watermelon Riot April 15, 1856



# Vanderbilt Shipping through Nicaragua



Vapor de rueda "Hollemebeck", de 115 pies de largo y 45 toneladas. Un vapor parecido a este, "El San Francisco", abordó Mark Twain en La Virgen durante su "divertido resbalón a través de Nicaragua".

# The French Tragedy



“We are, gentlemen, soldiers under fire; let us salute the comrade who falls in the battle, but let us think only of the fight of tomorrow and of victory.”

French engineer and lobbyist  
Philippe Bunau-Varilla

# French Canal Project 1881-1889



1. French company granted exclusive rights
2. Ferdinand de Lesseps: driving force
  - a. promoter and financier of Suez Canal
  - b. sea-level canal
3. yellow fever and malaria - “white man’s graveyard”
4. blasting and excavating
  - Afro-West Indian workers
5. bankruptcy, corruption, disillusion
  - “Panama affair” = scandal
  - 22,000 lives 800,000 investors
6. completion of 40% of excavation



# French Chronology



1. French spirit of *revanche*:  
aftermath of Franco-Prussian War of 1870
2. *Le Grand Français* – Ferdinand de Lesseps  
overcame technical, political, and financial problems  
Suez Canal - November 17, 1869  
reputation, energy, and charisma – bond issues
3. sea-level canal despite misgivings
4. works begins on February 1, 1881
5. work force: Afro-West Indians from Jamaica and St. Lucia
6. rainy season 1881 – first deaths from yellow fever

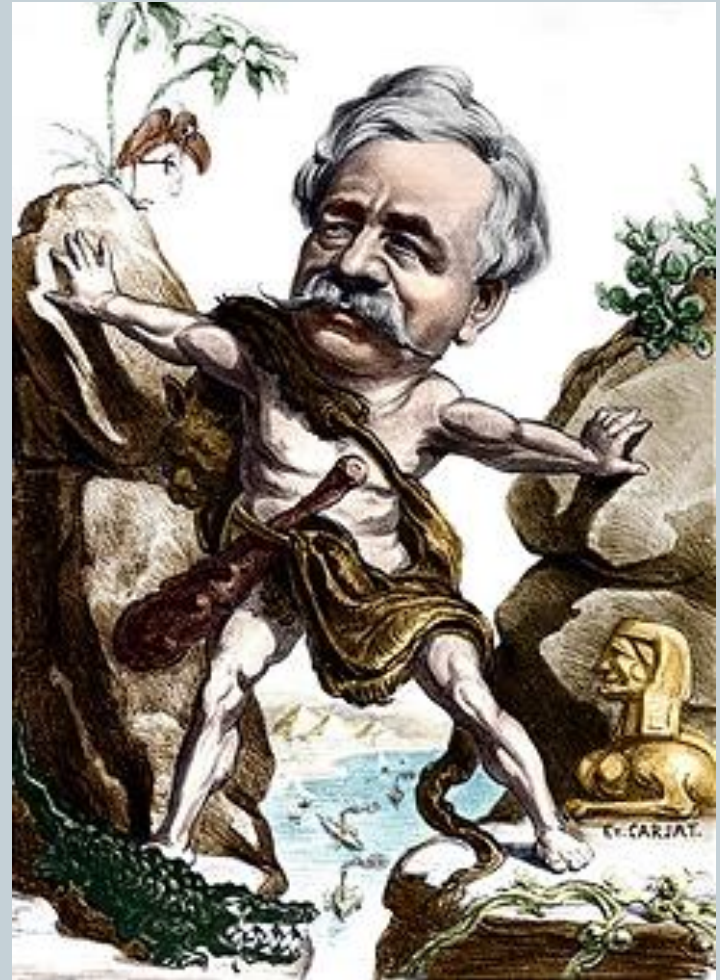
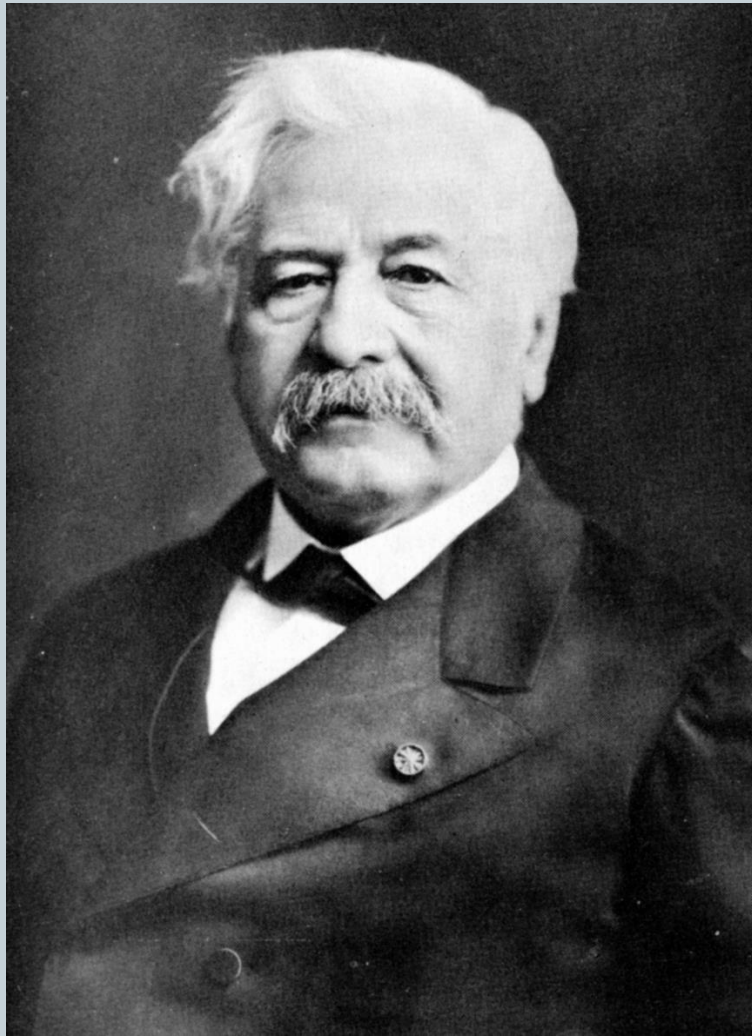


# French Chronology



7. Company hemorrhages money:  
    mismanagement, extravagance, and corruption
8. engineering problems – landslides, spoil, Chagres
9. wet seasons of 1882 and 1883 - desertions  
    “burials averaged 30 to 40 per day”
10. tragedy of Jules Dingler  
    died exhausted and heartbroken in 1885
11. *Harper's Weekly*:  
    “Is Monsieur de Lesseps a Canal Digger, or a Grave Digger?”

# Ferdinand de Lesseps

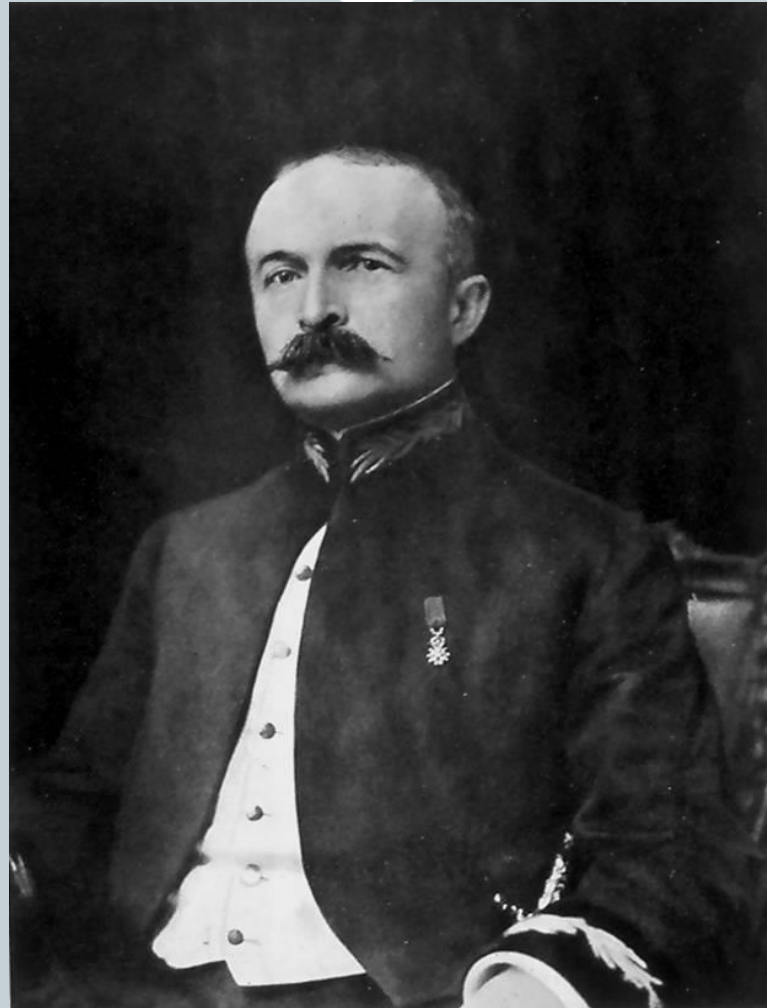


# Dingler's Folly



La Folie Dingler, built for M. Julius Dingler in the first French Company's days, but never occupied by him. The experience of M. Dingler on the Isthmus constitutes one of the saddest incidents in French canal history. His son, daughter and wife all contracted the dreaded yellow fever and died.

# Philippe Bunau-Varilla



# Collapse and Scandal



1. crash of Compagnie Universelle
2. bondholders seek redress
3. “Panama Affair” – trial of de Lesseps father and son
4. scandal and national humiliation

# French Liquidation Bond



N° 1620,357

**COMPAGNIE UNIVERSELLE DU CANAL INTER-OCEANIQUE DE PANAMA**

SOCIÉTÉ CIVILE AVEC RESPONSABILITÉ LIMITÉE À LA HAUTEUR SOCIALE POUR L'AMORTISSEMENT  
DES OBLIGATIONS À TITRE DU CANAL DE PANAMA. ÉMISSION DU 24 JUILLET 1889

**EMPRUNT DE 720 MILLIONS**  
**EMPRUNT AUTORISÉ CONFORMÉMENT AUX PRÉSCRIPTIONS DE LA LOI DU 21 MAI 1889,**  
**PAR LA LOI DU 5 JUIN 1889,**  
**MAIS SANS AUCUNE GARANTIE OU RESPONSABILITÉ DE L'ÉTAT**  
**SOUSCRIPTION PUBLIQUE À DEUX MILLIONS D'OBLIGATIONS À TITRE**

**TITRE PROVISOIRE AU PORTEUR NÉGOCIABLE**  
N° 1620,357

**DE UNE OBLIGATION LIBÉRÉE DE 60 FRANCS**

Le présent titre est libéré de 60 francs. La somme libérée est inscrite au verso du titre.

Le présent titre est libéré de 60 francs, en vertu de la Loi du 15 Juillet 1889, sur la liquidation de la Compagnie Universelle du Canal Inter-Océanique de Panama.

Paris, le 24 Juin 1897

Le Président-Directeur, G. MONTAUDO, Le Secrétaire, P. GAUTRON

*fait à Paris*

<p>1<sup>er</sup> ENDOSSEMENT DE 60 FRANCS du 24 Juin 1897</p> <p>2<sup>nd</sup> ENDOSSEMENT DE 60 FRANCS du 24 Juin 1897</p>	<p>3<sup>rd</sup> ENDOSSEMENT DE 60 FRANCS du 24 Juin 1897</p> <p>4<sup>th</sup> ENDOSSEMENT DE 60 FRANCS du 24 Juin 1897</p>	<p>5<sup>th</sup> ENDOSSEMENT DE 60 FRANCS du 24 Juin 1897</p> <p>6<sup>th</sup> ENDOSSEMENT DE 60 FRANCS du 24 Juin 1897</p>	<p>7<sup>th</sup> ENDOSSEMENT DE 60 FRANCS du 24 Juin 1897</p> <p>8<sup>th</sup> ENDOSSEMENT DE 60 FRANCS du 24 Juin 1897</p>
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**Titre placé en vertu de la Loi du 15 Juillet 1889**  
**non productif d'intérêts, libéré**  
**à l'égard de la Société civile d'amortissement**

*La Liquidation de la Compagnie Universelle du Canal Inter-Océanique de Panama*  
**P. GAUTRON**  
*Pour le Liquidateur et par Procuration Spéciale et Authentique*