



SECTION 3

The United States and Latin America

Objectives

1. Explain why and how the United States built the Panama Canal.
2. Discuss how Presidents expanded the Monroe Doctrine to intervene in the affairs of Caribbean nations.
3. Describe how relations between the United States and Mexico became strained under President Wilson.

Prepare to Read

Reading Skill

Focus Research Topics

Research topics must be specific. Frame questions to a particular time and place. Avoid questions that would require yes or no answers. Connect questions to the context of your history reading. Work toward asking questions that can be answered with evidence from available and reliable research sources.

Vocabulary Builder

High-Use Words

hostile, p. 694

invest, p. 696

Key Terms and People

isthmus, p. 693

William C. Gorgas, p. 694

corollary, p. 696

dollar diplomacy, p. 696

Francisco Villa, p. 697

★ **Background Knowledge** By 1902, the United States was a world power, with colonies overseas and a strong economy. In this section, you will learn how it used its power in Latin America.

Linking the Oceans

During the Spanish-American War, the U.S. Navy sent the battleship *Oregon* from San Francisco to Cuba. The trip—14,000 miles around the tip of South America—took more than two months.

Clearly, a shorter route was needed. A canal across Central America would link the Atlantic and Pacific oceans. President Theodore Roosevelt was determined to build that canal. Not only would it improve global shipping, but it would also make it easier for the U.S. Navy to defend the nation's new overseas empire.

Choosing a Site At 50 miles wide, the Isthmus of Panama was the ideal location for a canal. An **isthmus** is a narrow strip of land joining two larger areas of land. In 1902, Panama was a province of Colombia. Roosevelt offered Colombia \$10 million in cash and \$250,000 yearly in rent to allow the United States to build a canal through Panama.

Many Colombians opposed the deal because it would give the United States permanent control over a 6-mile-wide stretch of Colombian territory. Other Colombians claimed that the rights were worth far more than the United States had offered. Colombia's government held out for more money. However, Roosevelt was impatient. He did not want to lose time in bargaining.

Main Idea

In order to build a canal between the oceans, Teddy Roosevelt helped Panama to break away from Colombia.



Route of the USS *Oregon*

Vocabulary Builder

hostile (HAHS tihl) *adj.* unfriendly; intending to do harm; like an enemy

Main Idea

Despite many obstacles, construction was completed and ships began traveling through the Panama Canal in 1914.



Focus Research Topics

Suggest a more focused research question that builds on the following topic: How do science and economics work together?

Revolt in Panama Roosevelt knew that many Panamanians disliked Colombian rule. Secretly, he let them know that the United States would help if they claimed independence. The Panamanians, of course, would then reap the rewards of a canal.

A revolt took place on November 3, 1903. U.S. gunboats waited in the harbor to provide support for the rebels. U.S. Marines landed in Colón to prevent **hostile** Colombian troops from reaching Panama City. Many Americans were alarmed by Roosevelt's role in the revolt, criticizing his "gunboat diplomacy."

The United States immediately recognized the independent Republic of Panama. Three days later, a Frenchman acting for Panama signed a treaty giving the United States permanent use and control of a 10-mile-wide zone across the Isthmus of Panama. The United States agreed to pay \$10 million plus \$250,000 a year in rent.

Checkpoint How did the United States help rebels in Panama?

The Panama Canal

In 1904, the U.S. government began to build a canal across Panama. President Roosevelt urged the engineers to "Make the dirt fly!"

Fighting Disease The first great obstacle to building the canal was not an engineering problem. It was disease. Malaria and yellow fever were widespread in Panama. Real work on the canal could not begin until those diseases were controlled.

William C. Gorgas, an American expert on tropical diseases, took up the problem. Most people at the time believed that the damp night air caused yellow fever and malaria. A major breakthrough came when a Cuban doctor, Carlos Juan Finlay, discovered that yellow fever was transmitted by a certain kind of mosquito. An English doctor, Ronald Ross, found that a different kind of mosquito carried malaria.

At Gorgas's direction, workers cleared brush and drained swamps where mosquitoes lived. The huge effort paid off. By 1906, Gorgas had nearly wiped out yellow fever and reduced malaria in Panama.

The "Big Ditch" Construction of the canal involved three major tasks. Workers had to cut through a mountain, dam a river, and erect the canal's giant locks. By raising or lowering the water level, the locks would allow ships to cross Panama's Cordillera Mountains.

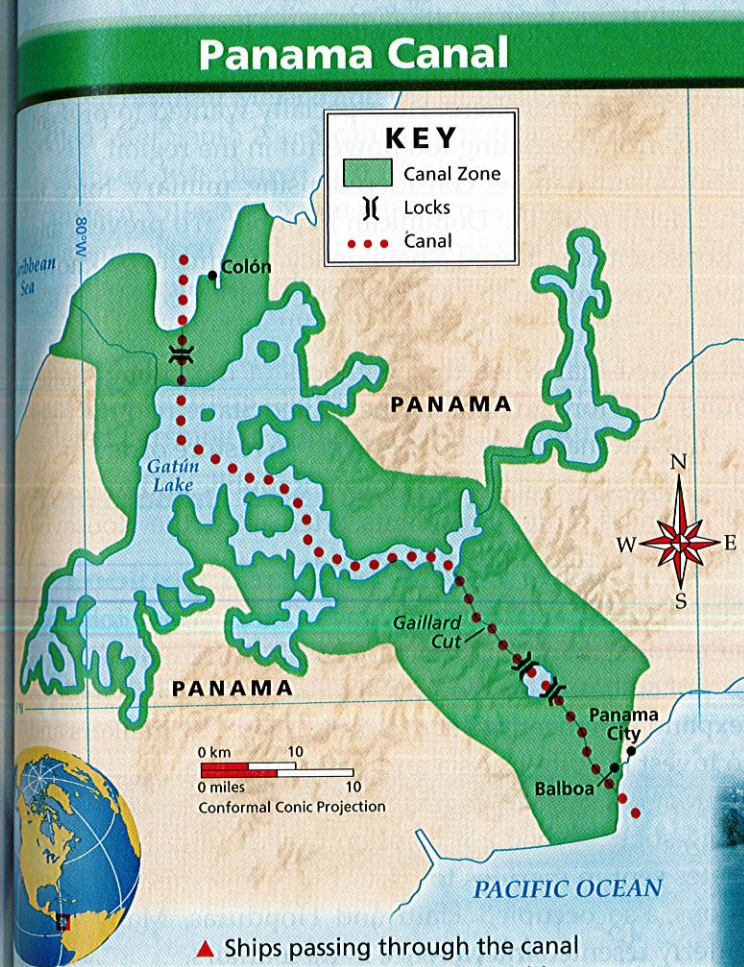
The most challenging job was digging the Gaillard Cut, a 9-mile ditch through the mountains. Thousands of men worked day after day under the tropical sun or in drenching rainstorms. Mudslides were a constant problem. To many workers, it seemed that the digging would never end. One later recalled, "I load cement, I unload cement. I carry lumber until my shoulders peel."

While engineers and supervisors came from the United States, most of the laborers were West Indians of African descent. Some 20,000 were from Barbados. More than 6,000 workers lost their lives during the construction of the canal.

THE Panama Canal

Building of the Panama Canal was one of the greatest engineering projects of all time. Construction of the canal began in 1904 and was finished in 1914. When it was completed, the Atlantic and Pacific oceans were linked.

Critical Thinking: Synthesize Information What were the costs and benefits of building the canal?



FAST FACTS

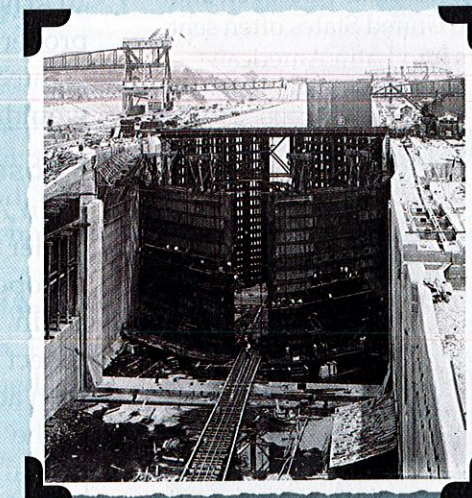
Length: 50 miles
Cost to build: \$375 million
Time to build: 10 years
Amount of earth removed during construction: more than 230 million cubic yards

Source: Panama Canal Authority

History Interactive

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Locks Under Construction ▲ Because of the uneven elevation in the Canal Zone, the canal planners designed a system of locks to raise and lower the water level. This photograph shows construction of a lock in 1913. The huge gates open and close to let water in and out.



Main Idea

Under Presidents Roosevelt and Taft, the United States often sent soldiers into Latin American nations.

Despite unexpected delays, work on the canal was finished six months ahead of schedule. The Panama Canal opened on August 15, 1914. After years of work, the Atlantic and the Pacific were joined.

✓Checkpoint What problems did canal builders overcome?

Wielding a "Big Stick" in Latin America

Theodore Roosevelt was fond of quoting an old West African proverb: "Speak softly and carry a big stick; you will go far." He wanted the world to know that if diplomacy failed, the United States would not hesitate to use military force to protect its interests.

Roosevelt Corollary Roosevelt applied his "big stick" policy in Latin America. He asserted the claim of the United States to be the leader in the Western Hemisphere. He especially wanted to prevent European nations from becoming too powerful in the region.

In 1904, European nations considered using military force to collect overdue debts from the Dominican Republic. To prevent any such action, Roosevelt announced a new policy. It came to be known as the Roosevelt Corollary to the Monroe Doctrine. A **corollary** is a logical extension of a doctrine or proposition.

Roosevelt argued that when the neighbors of the United States got into disputes with foreign nations, the United States had the right to "exercise . . . an international police power" to restore order.

Roosevelt sent marines to the Dominican Republic and took over the country's finances. Later Presidents often cited the Roosevelt Corollary when intervening in Latin America.

Dollar Diplomacy William Howard Taft, who followed Roosevelt as President, had a different approach. Taft favored **dollar diplomacy**, a policy based on the idea that economic ties were the best way to expand American influence. Taft urged U.S. bankers and businesses to **invest** heavily in Asia and Latin America.

Dollar diplomacy led to as many military interventions as Roosevelt's "big stick." When a revolution broke out in Nicaragua, the United States sent in marines to protect U.S. investments. Later, American troops also occupied Haiti and Honduras. Many Latin Americans bitterly resented interference in their affairs.

✓Checkpoint How did Roosevelt build on the Monroe Doctrine?

Vocabulary Builder

invest (ihn VEHS) v. to supply money for a project in order to make a profit

The U.S. and Latin America

Fearing European intervention in Latin America, U.S. foreign policy asserted U.S. power in the Western Hemisphere. **Critical Thinking: Identify Effects** Use information in the text to provide one effect of each policy listed in the chart.

U.S. Policy in Latin America, 1823–1909		
Monroe Doctrine (1823) Monroe asserts that the United States will not permit European nations to interfere with the free nations of Latin America.	Roosevelt Corollary (1904) Theodore Roosevelt reinforces the Monroe Doctrine by claiming the right to use force to prevent intervention in Latin America.	Dollar Diplomacy (1909) Taft's policy aims to protect U.S. economic investments in Latin America and in other regions.

Relations With Mexico

Woodrow Wilson, who became President in 1913, had his own ideas about foreign relations. He stated that U.S. foreign policy should aim to support and nurture democracy throughout the world.

Wilson's policy got its first test in relations with Mexico. In 1911, Mexicans had overthrown longtime dictator Porfirio Díaz. Mexico was plunged into a violent revolution that went on until 1917. Wilson at first followed a policy that he called "watchful waiting." He said he hoped Mexico would develop a democratic government.

In 1914, a minor incident led Wilson to intervene in Mexico. U.S. sailors who went ashore in Tampico were briefly arrested. Although they were released promptly with an apology, Wilson sent the navy to occupy the port of Veracruz. More than 100 Mexicans died. The incident brought Mexico and the United States close to war. Tempers cooled after South American nations arranged for peace talks.

Wilson was drawn into Mexican affairs again by the actions of **Francisco Villa**, a Mexican rebel general nicknamed Pancho. In 1916, Villa's rebels crossed into New Mexico. They raided and burned the town of Columbus, killing 18 Americans.

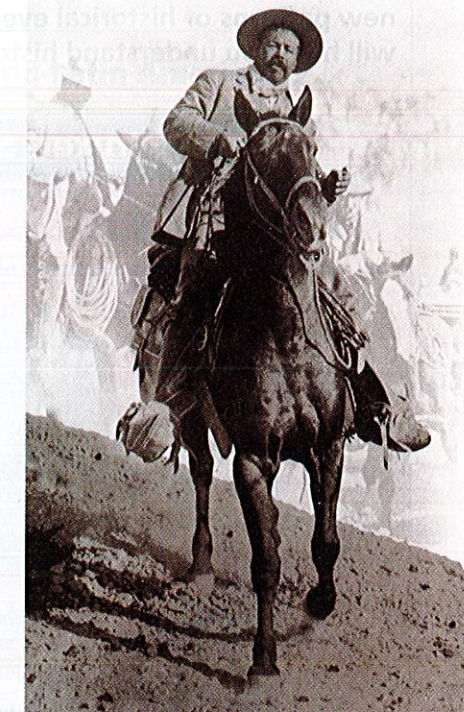
Mexico's president reluctantly let the United States pursue Villa into Mexico. On Wilson's orders, General John J. Pershing led several thousand soldiers across the border. After 11 months, Wilson ordered Pershing to withdraw without capturing Villa.

✓Checkpoint What was Wilson's policy toward Mexico?

★ Looking Back and Ahead World events provided the backdrop for the withdrawal of troops from Mexico. In 1917, war was raging in Europe and parts of Africa, Asia, and the Pacific. In the next chapter, you will learn about that world war and the U.S. role in it.

Main Idea

Under Woodrow Wilson, the United States used military force in Mexico.



Pancho Villa

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Comprehension and Critical Thinking

- (a) Recall** Why was the building of a canal important to the United States?
(b) Understand Sequence What events led to the eventual building of the Panama Canal?
- (a) Describe** According to President Wilson, what was the goal of U.S. foreign policy?
(b) Compare and Contrast How did the foreign policies of Presidents Roosevelt and Taft differ?

Reading Skill

- 3. Focus Research Topics** Reread the text following the subheading "Roosevelt Corollary." Suggest a more focused research question based on the following: How did Latin Americans respond to U.S. actions under the Roosevelt Corollary?

Vocabulary Builder

Read the sentence below. If it is true, write YES. If it is not true, write NO and explain why.
4. Engineers built the canal through an **isthmus** river bed.

Writing

- 5.** Choose one of the following statements about U.S. support of the Panamanian rebels in 1903. Revise the statement to make its language more restrained and persuasive. **Statements:**
(a) The greedy Colombian government stood in the way of progress, but Roosevelt found a way around it.
(b) When Colombia stood up to Roosevelt, he acted like a bully and took what he wanted anyhow.