

Panama Canal Passage

WE, PRINCESS CRUISES, CERTIFY THAT: Werner Graf

PASSED THROUGH THE PANAMA CANAL THIS DAY: 24th September 2005

ON BOARD THIS VESSEL: Sun Princess

Captain Ian McNaught

CAPTAIN

Passenger Services Director Franco Consavari

WITNESS

Completed in 1914, the Panama Canal was the culmination of a dream shared by many that began in 1513 with the Spanish conquistador Balboa. He was the first European to trek across the 43-miles-wide isthmus. The French Canal Company began construction of the Panama Canal in 1880 but, plagued by diseases, financial burdens and engineering problems, sold its rights and properties to the United States for \$40 million. France's investment in the canal project was \$287 million, a loss of \$240 million.

The United States began construction in 1904 and completed the monumental project in 10 years at a cost of approximately \$387 million.



The building of the Canal involved three main problems: engineering, sanitation and organization. For example, the engineering challenges alone involved digging through the Continental Divide, constructing the largest earth dam ever built up to that time, designing and building the most massive canal locks ever envisioned, constructing the largest gates ever swung, and solving environmental problems of enormous proportions.

The Panama Canal Commission - a U.S. government agency - operated and administered operations of the canal until the start of the New Millennium. (In the late 1970's a treaty had been formally signed to transfer the canal back to Panama and this was effected on 31st December, 1999.)