



The Panama Canal began construction in 1904 and was completed in 1914 at the cost of \$380 million. The canal itself is 51 miles long with a width ranging from nearly a mile wide to about 500 feet in some places. Tolls depend on the weight and type of ship that is traveling through the locks. An average of 17,000 ships take the 8 hour journey through the canal every year at an average cost of \$58,000 per ship.

The Panama Canal

When Theodore Roosevelt became President in 1901, he was determined to build a canal through the Isthmus of Panama. Roosevelt knew a canal would benefit American commerce and military capability by avoiding the long trip around South America. However, the largest obstacle was the fact that Panama was owned by the country of Columbia. Roosevelt offered \$10 million in cash plus \$250,000 a year in rent but the Columbians refused. This angered Roosevelt. The President promptly sent in the military to help the people of Panama overthrow the Columbian government. On November 3, 1903 Panama declared itself an independent republic. Many people in Latin America and the U.S. Congress felt that America was wrong in aiding a revolution. Roosevelt's answer: "I took the Canal Zone. Let the others debate if it was right."

1. How long is the Panama Canal?
2. How many locks are there in the canal?
3. How long does it take to get through the canal?
4. How much money, on average, does the canal take in annually?
5. What was the largest obstacle in building the canal?
6. What two reasons did Roosevelt give when he made the decision to "get involved in the affairs" of Panama?