The Panama Canal was an American success story. Built under budget (total cost: $434,000, increased to $1,930,000), the American government undertook to build a high holding dike and its waters flowed down to the sea, making possible the transit of ships between the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans.

In 1912 the Gatun Dam was completed, causing water in the Chagres River to back up and flood the area downstream. This flood filled the Panama Canal with water and allowed ships to travel between the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans.

Politics have always plagued Panama. When the Canal was officially handed over to Panama at the end of 1914, the country was in a state of political unrest. The government of Panama had been streamlined at Stevens' request, and Goethals was now supreme commander of the Canal Zone.

Everything was now coming together, and in November of that year Roosevelt paid a visit to Panama, the first time a serving American president had done so. His visit was a success, and he returned to Washington with a renewed confidence in his abilities.

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