



*New York State Archives*

**New York State Thruway Authority Motion Pictures of  
Thruway Construction and Related Matters 14512**

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## Overview of the Records

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<b>Repository:</b>	New York State Archives
<b>Summary:</b>	This series contains promotional films produced by either the Thruway Authority Motion Picture Unit or the Photographic Bureau within the Department of Public Information. The films cover subjects such as construction; opening ceremonies for different road sections and bridges; portrayals of the road's benefits to the state in prosperity, convenience, and safety; portrayals of the advantages of tandem-trailer trucking; maintenance programs; and traffic studies.
<b>Creator:</b>	New York State Thruway Authority
<b>Title:</b>	Motion pictures of Thruway construction and related matters
<b>Quantity:</b>	15 cubic feet
<b>Quantity:</b>	392 motion picture films; 13 videotapes
<b>Inclusive Date:</b>	1951-1967
<b>Series:</b>	14512

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## Administrative History

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The motion picture collection appears to be the work of a Thruway Authority Motion Picture Unit or Photographic Bureau within the Department of Public Information. The Department created its earliest films for television promotion of the 1951 constitutional amendment that allowed the state to guarantee the Thruway Authority's bonds and thus complete the Thruway. The Department also produced new films in the mid-1950s to provide status reports on construction and to increase the use of the Thruway as quickly as possible. There were hundreds of showings of Thruway films during these years. During the early 1960s, another feature film was made to encourage trucks to use the Thruway. Thereafter, film was used for traffic studies, training, and documentation of Thruway operations.

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## Scope and Content Note

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This series contains promotional films produced by a Thruway Authority Motion Picture Unit or Photographic Bureau within the Department of Public Information. The films, which span 1951-1967, cover the following subjects: construction; opening ceremonies for different road sections and bridges (Governors Thomas Dewey and W. Averell Harriman appear during their respective administrations); portrayals of the road's benefits to the state in prosperity, convenience and safety; portrayals of the advantages of tandem-trailer trucking; maintenance programs; and traffic studies. Highlights of the series include documentary footage on engineering accomplishments such as the relocation of a section of the Barge Canal and construction of the Tappan Zee Bridge; features of the safety program, such as the Communications Center; footage of the land through which the Thruway runs, ca. 1950; New York's major cities as they looked in the early 1950s; long-distance trucking early in its development; public relations via theater newsreel, television, and the Thruway's promotional tour; and construction of a major public works project.

Footage of construction of the Tappan Zee Bridge, the first American bridge supported by underwater buoyant foundation blocks, is extensive. The films also address postwar economic growth, labor and materials shortages, and fears that the Korean War will mushroom into a Third World War. The film narration is similar to the Authority's print promotional literature.

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## Other Finding Aids

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### Available at Repository

Item list is available at the repository.

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## Use of Records

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### Access Restrictions

There are no restrictions regarding access to or use of this material.

### Alternate Formats Available

## Items Online

Selected motion pictures from this series have been digitized and are available in State Archives Digital Collections.

[Motion pictures of Thruway construction and related matters, 1951-1967](#)

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## Access Terms

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- Roads--Design and construction
- Motion pictures (visual works)
- New York State Thruway (N.Y.)
- Constructing roads
- Constructing highways
- Videotapes
- New York (State)
- New York (State). Governor (1955-1958 : Harriman)
- New York (State). Governor (1943-1954 : Dewey)