



New York State Archives

**New York State Department of Public Works Bureau of
Research and Statistics State, District, County, and Special
Highway Planning Maps A3229**

New York State Archives
222 Madison Avenue
Albany, NY 12230
archref@nysed.gov
URL: <http://www.archives.nysed.gov/>

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Overview of the Records

Repository:	New York State Archives
Summary:	This series consists of state and county highway maps showing completed, improved, and proposed roads. Most are official published county highway maps, annotated to show state and county highway systems corrected to 1936. Also included are publications and correspondence on special highway projects in New York City, dating from the 1940s and early 1950s, and a number of World War II maps indicating military priority highways.
Creator:	New York (State). Department of Public Works. Bureau of Research and Statistics
Title:	State, district, county, and special highway planning maps
Quantity:	1 cubic foot
Quantity:	(including approximately 140 maps)
Inclusive Date:	1909-1955
Bulk Date:	(bulk 1929-1949)
Series:	A3229

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Arrangement

Numeric by district number.

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Scope and Content Note

This is apparently a planning file of the Department of Public Works, which was responsible for construction and maintenance of the state's highway system, including the parkways. The series consists of state and county highway system maps showing completed, improved, and proposed roads.

The majority are official published county highway maps, categorized within Department of Public Works districts 1 to 10 and annotated to show state and county highway systems corrected to 1936. Also included are a small amount of publications and correspondence on special highway projects in New York City dating from the 1940s and early 1950s, and a number of World War II maps indicating military priority highways.

Most of the maps are marked as revised as of 1936 or 1937; almost all carry an office stamp as "received" in (usually November) 1937. They may be part of a renewed planning effort, especially since highway planning during this period was taken up with designs for thruways, arterials, superhighways and other methods of eliminating mileage and congestion. The then Commissioner of Highways, Arthur Brandt, surveyed the entire state highway system to plan for a comprehensive six-year reconstruction program.

The county maps data from the 1930s and 1940s, coinciding with the era when the state's highway system was attaining a mature stage of development. Many of the county highway maps are the original versions of the maps prepared when counties became responsible for maintenance of the state highways in 1929-1930. As had been noted in the 1929 report of the Superintendent of Public Works, in making up the county road system maps it was "obvious that many roads included by the counties on those maps should be on the State highway system." Originally designed to pick up as many centers of population as possible, many county roads served as cut-offs to main line traffic. Over the years automobile and truck traffic became a larger factor in highway construction, and roads were looked upon as a value to commerce as well as to local communities. Planning might take into account the way state and county road systems interact.

Although construction was essentially halted during World War II, the Department of Public Works continued planning during that time and was involved in making the state's highways available for emergency military use. Highway development resumed after the war.

Each district section contains a map showing the counties included in that district. These function as index maps and are usually titled "Department of Public Works (Bureau/Division of Highways) Division No.--". Two exceptions are maps from the "State of New York Commission of Highways", and a "Railroad Map of the State of New York to accompany the annual report of the Public Service Commission." In addition there is a printed "Rand McNally Standard Map of New York Main Highway Map" at the front of the series, and another state map showing the boundaries of the ten Department of Public Works districts in a section of otherwise loose material at the end of the series.

The county maps present for each district are distinct in form. Most are annotated printed copies, often whiteprint and more rarely blueprint copies, with revisions in color (highlighting existing routes, improved roads, completed or proposed routes) or black ink (notations and route numbers). Legends on the maps vary. Quite often county highways appear in red and state highways in black. Color coding and highlighting is used to represent different types of roads/routes (e.g., bituminous macadam shown as green, gravel or cinders shown as pink) and use of solid and dashed lines is another common technique. Often the annotations are minor; some are easily overlooked, especially on a larger sheet or against the printed background of the base map. There are some manuscript notes on projected improvements of highways.

Information on the county maps generally includes title (usually designating it as a map of the county "highway system"), date, scale of miles, legend(s), and name of county superintendent (of highways) or other authorizing official or publishing entity. Map sizes range from small annotated sections of a topographic map measuring 45 x 34 cm to a large whiteprint copy measuring 75 x 230 cm. There are sometimes complex legends for the state and county systems. Other maps supply one legend showing hard surfaced pavement and the designations of U.S. highways and state highways. One distinctive map is of roads at the New York State fairgrounds dated April, 1939. Occasionally there are duplicates of prior map versions, usually unannotated and sometimes in reduced size, included with the revised county maps. Some maps fold up into the booklets in which they were published by the county, and some of these contain the name of the publisher (e.g., "Map of Cattaraugus County New York published...by Standard Map Co. Chicago, Ill."). The folded size of these booklets is approximately 18 x 10 cm.

Following the section for the final district (10) is a small folder labeled "Maps" which contains loose printed material and some maps. The bulk of material dates from the late 1930s and early 1940s. The printed records often feature New York City construction projects related to highways, sometimes as reports to the Mayor of New York. Several are authored by Robert Moses as both Commissioner of the New York City Department of Parks and Chairman of the Triborough Bridge Authority. The records include: reports on proposed and completed railroad grade crossings; reports on proposed bridge projects; an apparently unpublished proposal (illustrated with plans, maps, and sketches) to aid the national defense by filling the "Vital Gaps in the New York Metropolitan Arteries" (1940); brochures highlighting the progress of various New York State parks (1934-1941); and publications on children's camps (1955, 1956). In rare instances a newspaper clipping or personal annotation appears on/in the publication. Some of the publications contain aerial photography.

Maps in this section include: a map of the Cross Island Parkway (1938) with annotations on proposed bridge construction; a "Rand McNally War Map of World War II" showing naval and air bases and stations of combatants; a copy of a map showing the subdivision of the state into "districts for the prevention of sabotage"; and a map of highway systems in Montgomery, Ontario, and Saratoga counties dating from the late 1940s and early 1950s.

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Use of Records

Access Restrictions

Use is restricted: Use only under supervision or with assistance of archivist due to fragile physical condition.

Administrative Information

Custodial History

Collation date 1937-1955.

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Access Terms

- Planning highway construction
- Bridges--Design and construction--New York (State)--New York
- Maps (documents)
- New York (State)
- New York (N.Y.)
- Maintaining infrastructure
- Index maps
- Highway planning--New York (State)
- World maps
- Reports
- Whiteprints
- Roads--Location--New York (State)
- Road maps
- World War, 1939-1945--Transportation--New York (State)
- Railroads crossings
- Triborough Bridge Authority
- New York (N.Y.). Department of Parks
- New York (State). Department of Transportation
- Brandt, Arthur.
- New York (State). Division of Highways
- New York (State). Department of Public Works. Division of Administration
- Moses, Robert, 1888-1981.