



New York State Archives

**New York State Superintendent of Public Works Card Index
to Western Division Canal Maps, Plans, Estimates and
Related Structures A4290**

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 volume indexes three series of records documenting work on the western division of the State's canal system: B0380, Western Division Maps and Plans; B1211, Roll Maps Relating to the Western Division of the Erie and Barge Canals; and B0730, Engineers' Field Books Pertaining to the Construction of the State's Canal System. They provide subject access to maps, plans, drawings, estimates, and related documents produced for proposed work and ongoing maintenance of the canal system.
Creator:	New York (State). Superintendent of Public Works
Title:	Card index to Western Division canal maps, plans, estimates and related structures
Quantity:	1.5 cubic feet
Quantity:	7000 cards
Inclusive Date:	circa 1830-1925
Series:	A4290

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Arrangement

Arranged by subject category.

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Scope and Content Note

This series indexes at least three series of records documenting work on the Western Division of the state canal system: B0380-85, Western Division Maps and Plans; B1211-85, Roll Maps Relating to the Western Division of the Erie and Barge Canals; and B0730-85, Engineers' Field Books Pertaining to the Construction of the State's Canal System. The index cards were apparently created to provide subject access to the various maps, plans, drawings, estimates,

and related documents produced in the proposed work and ongoing maintenance to the canal system and its structures in the Western Division.

Both the creation date and the compilation date for the index are uncertain; the span dates of the records indexed are approximately 1830 to 1925. Printed reference on the cards to the Superintendent of Public Works places the earliest date of creation around 1876 when that office was established.

During the period from 1912 to 1915 there was an increased awareness of the value of canal records coinciding with the period of enlargement and improvement of the canals into what became the barge canal system. It is likely that attempts were made at that time to gather related records together, to better organize access to the records, and possibly to create indexes or organize existing indices according to certain categories. It is certain that the index remained in active use well into the 1970s.

The cards are pre-printed and measure 3" x 5" in size. Information is handwritten on the cards, in ink. The majority of cards show the subject reference in the upper left corner, and the map number in the upper right corner (or the designation "book" when the reference is to a field book). The term "map" is used loosely to refer to a range of documents including plans, drawings, profiles and other related representations. Minor tabs are sometimes present designating particular subject subdivisions (e.g., creeks, locks, culverts). Not all information for which space is allotted on the printed cards is normally provided. Typically information exists on some or all of the following: kind of work or specific type of structure (e.g., "Whipple Arch bridge"); geographic coverage or specific work area (e.g., proposed abandonment "near Highland Ave., Brighton"; or highway "between Salamanca and Red House"); law and chapter number of authorizing legislation; references to field books and final estimates, both often giving volume number, page number, and/or date(s); and specific and sometimes extensive remarks (e.g., map "very old"; waste weir "on land of Elizabeth Dayton"; "proposed extension" of vertical wall; dates of surveys and names of surveyors).

The series indexed are not treated distinctly within the index (i.e., no single section of the index relates to one particular series). Additional series may be found to be indexed upon further research. Typed labels found within the index suggest that the cards were previously arranged and housed in a card drawer file. These labels postdate the cards and were obviously prepared to indicate the scope of original drawer contents. They are neither complete nor entirely reliable.

The index contains one "miscellaneous" section comprised of a straight alphabetical group (A-Z) of both geographic names (including those of cities, counties, and other municipalities) and of subjects. Some of the major subject divisions include: Abandoned Land; Appropriations; Aqueducts; Basins; Damage; Dams; Harbors; Sewers; Spoil Banks; and Vertical Walls.

In addition to this general section, the index includes the following separate, self-contained groups: Bridges; Creeks; Locks; Culverts; Waste Weirs; Blue Line; and Roll Maps.

It would appear that these groups were historically separate from the main file, but it is possible that they were artificially separated at some indeterminate time. It is certain that the category for roll maps refers directly to current archives series B1211-85, Roll Maps Relating to the

Western Division of the Erie and Barge Canals. The series is vital to access the mixed and voluminous series which it indexes, especially series B0380, Western Division Maps and Plans. It is the only complete index for the Western Division extant. Within the groups arrangement is predominantly alphabetical, although in the case of the categories for locks and culverts there are both number and word headings, with the latter often consisting of street names. The relationship between the cards that are filed according to number and those filed by words is unclear. Names given in the culvert section, for example, may relate somehow to the numbers given in the same section; similarly, a term listed in the lock section may be the colloquial name for a specific lock, and its corresponding lock number may be what the numbers in the index represent. It is not possible to state any such relationships with certainty, but researchers should be aware of the possibilities the index offers.

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Other Finding Aids

Available at Repository

Container list is available at the repository.

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Use of Records

Access Restrictions

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

Administrative Information

Processing Information

The index was rearranged and rehoused by Archives staff in 1991 according to the arrangement suggested by typed slips, apparently taken from the original file drawers. The slips were found among the cards, which were stored haphazardly within standard storage boxes. Original groupings were maintained and groups were kept in the order in which they were found.

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Access Terms

- Locks (Hydraulic engineering)
- Bridges--Design and construction
- Erie Canal (N.Y.)
- Maintaining canals
- Cards (information artifacts)
- New York (State)
- Indexing
- New York State Barge Canal System (N.Y.)
- Maintaining infrastructure
- Card indexes
- Card files
- Indexes (reference sources)
- Canals--New York (State)
- Canals--Design and construction
- New York (State). Department of Transportation