



New York State Archives

**New York State Engineer and Surveyor Sectional Maps of the
Erie, Champlain, and Oswego Canals B0253**

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

Table of Contents

Overview of the Records 3

Arrangement 3

Scope and Contents 3

Related Information 5

Other Finding Aids 5

Use of Records 5

Administrative Information 5

Access Terms 6

Overview of the Records

Repository:	New York State Archives
Summary:	This series of maps (commonly referred to as "Schillner Maps") depict land along the Erie, Champlain, and Oswego canals acquired by the state. Each map provides detailed information on state owned property, and shows the locations of the 1825 canal alignment and related structures such as locks, slips, dams, bridges, and roads which have since been obliterated. In addition they show municipal boundaries, bodies of water, property lines, names of owners, streets, railroad lines, businesses, and civic landmarks.
Creator:	New York (State). State Engineer and Surveyor
Title:	Sectional maps of the Erie, Champlain, and Oswego Canals
Quantity:	92.4 cubic feet
Quantity:	71 maps
Inclusive Date:	1896
Series:	B0253

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Arrangement

Arranged by canal and therein geographically.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Scope and Content Note

This series consists of 71 manuscript maps depicting land along the Erie, Champlain, and Oswego canals acquired by the state for canal purposes up to 1896. They are apparently the product of surveys conducted by the office of the State Engineer and Surveyor in response to Chapter 79 of the Laws of 1895, which appropriated nine million dollars, contingent upon the approval of the electorate in November of that year, for the improvement of the canals.

The law required the State Engineer and Surveyor to prepare surveys and cost estimates for the deepening of the Erie and Oswego canals to nine feet, deepening the Champlain Canal to seven feet, and for lengthening some Erie and Oswego locks. The purpose of the surveys was to help determine the best method of accomplishing the improvement, and the cost estimates were based on them.

Since the estimates were based on the surveys and the judgments of the various engineers in charge, it is easy to view these maps as containing information relevant to decision-making. Facts such as the amount of additional water required, possible disturbance of the silted canal bottom, elevation of important pre-existing structures (culverts, aqueducts, locks, bridges) and the impact of altering canal banks on shipping facilities and city establishments would significantly affect cost. Whatever the original intent, it is important to note that these maps contain only selected information from the even more detailed surveys.

Each sectional map provides detailed information on state owned property, depicted as the area between two solid blue lines. The maps are especially important because they show, within dotted blue lines, the locations of the 1825 canal alignment and the related structures which had since been obliterated, such as locks, slips, dams, bridges, and roads. In addition they show: city, town and county lines; streams, rivers, bodies of water and islands; property lines, along with names of owners and sometimes acreage of land; and streets, railroad lines, businesses and civic landmarks (ice companies, mills, cemeteries, etc.).

The maps are commonly referred to as the "Schillner Maps" after George L. Schillner, who apparently supervised their execution in 1896. The total 454 mile length of the canals was surveyed beginning in January of 1896. This included 38 miles of the Oswego Canal, 65 miles of the Champlain Canal, and 315 miles of the Erie Canal represented in these maps.

Most of the 71 rolled sheets are divided into four sections. Each section varies in size from 30 cm to 60 cm in height x 176 cm in length within their respective neat lines. Overall sheet size is relatively uniform at 234 x 183 cm.

Maps are hand drawn in ink with color. Additional information, sometimes including redrawn courses of canals, is recorded in pencil. Although there is no legend, standard colors are present for water (blue wash), inner side of the tow path (red), and state owned land (blue). There is no scale given but figures clearly mark canal frontage and survey measurements by number of chains. Standard measure is one chain equal to 66 feet; figures given are multiples of that standard.

Maps cover three distinct areas. Within those groups each map has a consecutive roll number, printed on the back ends. There are 53 maps of the Erie Canal (arranged from Albany west to Buffalo Harbor); 10 maps of the Champlain Canal (Watervliet north to Whitehall); and 8 maps of the Oswego Canal (Salina north to Oswego).

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Related Information

Related Material

B0730Series B0730, Engineers' Field Books Pertaining to the Construction of the State's Canal System, contains some of the surveys upon which these maps were based.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Other Finding Aids

Available at Repository

Reports with map data for each section, generated by an in-house database, are available.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Use of Records

Access Restrictions

Restricted: Maps are fragile and may not be photocopied because of size. Use with supervision of archivist.

Administrative Information

Custodial History

The original of Map No. 3, Erie Canal section, was missing at time of accession. A photocopy of a tracing of it is available instead.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Access Terms

- Champlain Canal (N.Y.)
- Erie Canal (N.Y.)
- Maps (documents)
- New York (State)
- New York State Barge Canal System (N.Y.)
- Maintaining infrastructure
- Canals--New York (State)
- Manuscript maps
- Canals--Design and construction
- Oswego Canal (N.Y.)
- Schillner, George L.
- New York (State). Department of Transportation