



*New York State Archives*

**New York State Department of Public Works Western  
Division Canal Maps and Plans B0380**

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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 maps and plans that document work done to enlarge, improve, and maintain the channel and structures in the Western Division of the canal system. The series includes maps, drawings, tracings, and blueprints relating to Western Division work.
<b>Title:</b>	Western Division canal maps and plans
<b>Quantity:</b>	175 cubic feet
<b>Quantity:</b>	3900 items; 1200 maps
<b>Inclusive Date:</b>	1848-1925
<b>Bulk Date:</b>	1896-1912
<b>Series:</b>	B0380

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## Arrangement

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Numerical by map number.

B0380-18: Unarranged.

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## Scope and Content Note

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This series contains maps and plans (often made up of drawings, cross sections, profiles, diagrams, and other related representations) that document work done as part of the effort to enlarge, improve, and maintain the channel and structures in the Western Division of the canal system over a period of many years. The series is a mix of original manuscript maps and drawings, tracings, and blueprint copies.

Most sheets are annotated and some were apparently used as working copies. It is likely that several sheets relating to a single project, created by various hands at differing stages of work, were brought together after having been kept in the field offices of the State Engineer and

Surveyor. The State Engineer had responsibility for planning, construction and maintenance of the state's canals. This series apparently represents the main file for Western Division work.

Both the form and the articulation of the representations vary with the work being depicted; most often several distinct but related pieces are found together. For example, sheets of draft plans done in pencil are followed by inked versions, tracings, or blueprints of the same depiction. Some of these appear to be duplicate copies. At other times all pieces of a group are tracings or blueprint copies. Similarly, a general plan may be accompanied by several sheets of separate details. In other cases several different representations appear on one sheet or on accompanying sheets in combination (e.g., profiles, cross sections, elevations). Sheets are grouped according to a specific job or feature, and sometimes according to a distinct work contract. At least one sheet showed work completed, work in progress, and work to be done under a certain contract, but this seemed to be a rare instance.

Very occasionally typed forms are present that considerably postdate the sheet to which they are apparently related (e.g., a 1953 discharge data report prepared upon measurements taken in 1948, attached to a blueprint dated 1902). Such forms may be evidence of the fact that these documents remained in use over an extended time period, or for a very late collation date for the series.

It is difficult to generalize about such diversity, but the following characteristics are normally present.

Most representations are separately titled, some briefly and others more elaborately. Some maps and drawings have no title or identification other than the name of a preparer and the date.

Scales are usually present, and one is often given for each representation on a sheet. They vary but are usually given as a relation of feet to inches, and often both vertical and horizontal scales are present.

Maps and plans, especially blueprints, are often dated; the range of dates varies widely and does not influence or determine filing arrangement. Many drawings are undated, or have been cut at the edges where a date may have originally been given.

Size varies dramatically and many sheets (especially blueprints) are folded, often several times. The largest size is not determined, but must easily double the folder length of 122 cm. Most sheets are bordered by neat lines, but many others have been cut and pasted onto paper.

Annotations are found on all copies, usually in colored inks or crayon. There are sometimes individual legends or explanations as to color representations (e.g., red means "excavation completed"). Some drawings are done in ink with a watercolor wash. There are a few brownprints present.

In general maps are location maps that sometimes also include sketches or profiles, or elevations on the same sheet. They depict the general work area and/or specific sites of proposed enlargement or improvement. Some maps include topographic contour lines.

There are a wide range of identifiers and attributions. Some items' origins are identified, such as a print of a tracing from a specific place (in crayon on blueprint). Others list production statements such as "traced from Erie Co. Book of Maps...on file in the office of the Division Engineer" (in ink on tracing). Occasionally map tracings have certifications of accuracy from the State Engineer and Surveyor, usually dated and often with a seal affixed. Most blueprints have a standard printed certification block that has been filled in, and dated, stating they were examined and approved by some official (State Engineer, Chief Bridge Designer, Division Engineer, etc.). Some other blueprints have a block certifying that modified plans were submitted to the Engineer and Surveyor and approved by the Canal Board.

Additional notes are common and may include references to field book numbers, pages and dates; name of surveyor and/or date of survey; names of preparer, plotter, or division engineer, also often with dates; year and chapter number of authorizing legislation; and other extensive remarks on the specifics of work.

There are often cross references to maps or cross sections, often with specific roll numbers. The location of these referenced items is unclear. Similarly, statements may appear citing specific claim numbers, probably referring to canal damage claims (e.g., "maps produced to accompany the claim of...claim no...").

Stamped numbers appear in the lower right corner of most sheets; sometimes there are handwritten letters next to the stamped numbers signifying different parts of the same group or set (e.g., 1607 A, 1607 B, etc.). Several sheets within the group may be assigned a single number. In addition, sometimes the word "Indexed" is separately stamped above or next to the main number. This clearly indicates that the item was indexed in a separate card file (series A4290, Card Index to Western Division Canal Maps, Plans, Estimates, and Related Structures). Sheets that are not marked as being indexed have not been located in the index file, but it is by no means certain that all original cards are extant or that selected items that are not stamped cannot be found in the index. Many sets of blueprints are packaged in brown paper envelopes which have handwritten titles which were later inked over. These packages sometimes contain stray annotations (e.g., "built 1918-1919").

The series is arranged in folders according to the sequential "map" numbers (from 1 to 4015). These numbers also pertain to plans and related representations. Many numbers are missing. Each folder has a typed or handwritten label giving the span of numbers included in the folder, as well as a list of those numbers missing.

B0380-18: This accretion consists of 119 maps and plans depicting structures, reservoirs, and properties along the Genesee Valley Canal. Several of the items cover portions of the Erie Canal in the Lockport and Buffalo regions.

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## Related Information

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### Related Material

A4290 Card Index to Western Division Canal Maps, Plans, Estimates, and Related Structures, indexes this series in part.

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## Other Finding Aids

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### Available at Repository

A list of map numbers contained in each drawer is available at the repository.

B0380-18: Items 1 through 24 still bear stamps with catalog numbers from the original collection now in B0380.

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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 AvailableAlternate Formats Available

Scanned images of a small sample of canal drawings are available at the New York State Archives.

### Alternate Formats Available

### Items Online

High resolution images of selected original documents in this series are available in State Archives Digital Collections.

[Western Division canal maps and plans, 1848-1925 in Digital Collections](#)

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## Administrative Information

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### Custodial History

B0380-18: This accretion was part of the Canal Society of New York State's Emily and J. Hayward Madden Collection. The Maddens apparently obtained the maps and plans from the Rochester canal office of the NYS Department of Transportation in 1970. With their special interest in the Genesee Valley Canal, the Maddens primarily obtained maps and plans related to structures, reservoirs, and properties along that route.

### Acquisition Information

B0380-18: This accretion was transferred to the New York State Archives by the Canal Society of New York State.

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## Access Terms

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- Diagrams
- Locks (Hydraulic engineering)
- Erie Canal (N.Y.)
- Bridges--Design and construction
- Profiles
- Detail drawings
- Maps (documents)
- New York (State)
- New York State Barge Canal System (N.Y.)
- Maintaining infrastructure
- New York (State)--Western New York
- Constructing canals
- Blueprints
- Cross sections
- Canals--New York (State)
- Canals--Design and construction
- New York (State). Department of Transportation