



New York State Archives

**New York State Engineer and Surveyor Record Books of
Watersheds and Related Improvements in the Western
Division of the Barge Canal B0388**

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Overview of the Records

Repository:	New York State Archives
Summary:	This series consists of data, reports, maps, and related records on watersheds and related improvements in the Western Division of the Barge Canal. Records include reports on investigations of flood damage; proposed improvements; data and computations on discharges, river slopes, elevations, water levels, and flow; narratives on legal rights, statutes, and engineering issues relating to dams, bridges, and waterway access; descriptions of surveys done at state institutions; and lists of appropriation bills for work done on Indian reservations.
Creator:	New York (State). State Engineer and Surveyor
Title:	Record books of watersheds and related improvements in the Western Division of the Barge Canal
Quantity:	0.5 cubic feet
Quantity:	9 volume(s)
Quantity:	11 map(s)
Inclusive Date:	1919-1920
Series:	B0388

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Arrangement

Arranged by watershed area.

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Administrative History

The series is the result of the initiative of L.C. Hulburt, Western Division Engineer, as explained in the annual report of State Engineer and Surveyor Frank M. Williams for 1920. Records relating to improvements to the state's infrastructure were often the product of joint action of the office of the State Engineer and Surveyor and the Department of Public Works.

According to the annual report, they were done under specific legislative authority of "sporadic and unrelated statutes." At the time of this report the State Engineer was recommending that legislation for special improvements be "systematized." In the Western Division, Mr. Hulburd moved to organize the records filed there, specifically by assembling and classifying data and related records through a review of the hydrography of the western part of the state. The report also remarks on the "often conflicting requirements of navigation, sanitation, power-development and flood control" that are reflected in the records. Work was carried out without special funds in a "more or less desultory manner" with an eye toward use in "systematic, up-to-date, regional planning."

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Scope and Content Note

The series consists of copies of data, reports, maps, and related records on work done as improvements to the state's infrastructure. They were gathered into volumes by the office of the State Engineer and Surveyor according to the watershed areas found in western New York.

The data accumulated for many improvement projects related to how waterways were used or improved for navigation purposes, for flood prevention, or for health protection. The records logically relate to problems of drainage and protection associated with the canal system. Aside from the documents thus gathered, this series is an example of one effort to assemble and organize the files of the office of the Western Division of the Barge Canal.

According to the filing scheme streams were classified into eight watersheds, a reference index and filing systems were devised, and information on each watershed was assembled separately. Volumes contain an index page listing specific file contents. These contents are divided into the following sections: an outline of the classification of streams in the watershed; data on rivers and tributaries arranged according to the classification scheme and then within certain subject areas; miscellaneous plans (those not listed with the particular statute with which they are identified); and a list of related records (such as reports, notes from reports, newspaper clippings, and correspondence).

In the classification section, notes explain that the term "creek" is applied to streams and that "R" or "L" following the name indicates that a stream enters the water system from the right or the left side. The general subjects found under the section for data on rivers and tributaries include: drainage area (figures); general notes; bibliography (page and chapter references to various reports, largely unpublished reports on file in the department's records); rain and stream gages (which record state and U.S.G.S. gages with the maximum and minimum recorded flow and references to important tabulations and hydraulic studies); and chronology (references in chronological order to statutes providing for improvements, to reports and estimates on improvements, and also historical facts about the streams).

Examples of records grouped in the volumes include: preliminary and supplementary reports on investigations of flood damage, proposed improvements, or navigation conditions; data and computations on discharges, river slopes, elevations, and water levels and flow; narratives on legal rights, pertinent statutes, and engineering issues relating to dams, bridges, and waterway access; descriptions of surveys done at state institutions; and lists of appropriation bills (citations and amounts) for work done on Indian reservations.

Although the bulk of the series is textual, there are a few maps scattered among the nine volumes with some cross sections and sketches. These are drawn or traced in black ink on architect's linen and shaded with crayon. They include those showing: the location of the Genesee River; the location of state dams, along with several sectional and elevation drawings and cross sections of old dams; various changes made at Watkins on the Chemung Canal; and the city of Medina, along with several sheets showing lands deeded within that city.

A few of these maps have scales, which vary, and often explanatory notes, including references to page numbers in the book of deeds from which they were traced. The very few which are dated were made in July and August of 1919. There are also a very few copies (some blueprints) of computation charts.

General size of the documents is 20 x 32 cm, with the maps ranging from 20 x 25 cm to 35.5 x 35.5 cm, folded within the volume size of 35.5 x 23 cm.

The textual records are typescript. Newspaper clippings sometimes have hand written captions giving the name of the newspaper and issue date. Each volume has a typed list of all the watersheds pasted to the back of the front cover.

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Other Finding Aids

Available at Repository

Specific reference indexes are present for contents of various subdivisions within certain volumes.

Volume 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 this material.

Access Terms

- Waterways--New York (State)
- Rivers--Classification
- New York (State)
- Maps (documents)
- New York State Barge Canal System (N.Y.)
- Medina (N.Y.)
- Clippings (information artifacts)
- Genesee River Watershed (N.Y.)
- Blueprints
- Lake Ontario Watershed (N.Y.)
- Reports
- Classifying watersheds
- Niagara River Watershed (N.Y.)
- Chemung River Watershed (N.Y.)
- Allegheny River Watershed (N.Y.)
- Maintaining infrastructure
- Chemung Canal (N.Y.)
- Seneca Lake Watershed (N.Y.)
- Watersheds--New York (State)
- Rivers--Regulation
- Western New York (State)
- Clyde River (N.Y.)
- Hydrology--Research
- Lake Erie Watershed (N.Y.)
- Canals
- Hulburd, L.C.
- New York (State). Department of Transportation
- Williams, Frank M.