



New York State Archives

**New York State Engineer and Surveyor Contract Plans
Relating to Improvement of the Erie and Oswego Canals
B0395**

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Overview of the Records

Repository:	New York State Archives
Summary:	Consisting mostly of maps, drawings, specifications, and related material, these plans show proposed work for which contracts were let during the "Nine Million Dollar Improvement" of the Erie and Oswego canals. In addition to particulars of a job site (elevations, structures, proposed improvements), the maps sometimes show boundaries of state-owned property, type of business (store, barber, mill, etc.), and name of businesses or property owners.
Creator:	New York (State). State Engineer and Surveyor
Title:	Contract plans relating to improvement of the Erie and Oswego canals
Quantity:	13.9 cubic feet
Quantity:	50 rolls; 300 plans
Inclusive Date:	1895-1898
Series:	B0395

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Arrangement

Numerical by contract number.

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Administrative History

Chapter 79 of the Laws of 1895 proposed enlargement and improvement of the canals. Work was to be done by contract and in accordance with plans, specifications, and estimates prepared and approved by the State Engineer and Surveyor that stated the extent of each piece of work and the materials to be used in doing it. Succeeding legislation in 1896 and 1897 amended that law, regulating the making of contracts for work on the canal, reapportioning unexpended balances, and appropriating funds for carrying on canal improvements. These

records document some of the work contracted for during those years under the applicable laws.

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Scope and Content Note

This series contains plans (made up in part of maps, drawings, specifications and related forms of material) that show proposed work for which contracts were let during the "Nine Million Dollar Improvement" of the Erie and Oswego canals.

Multiple sheets exist for each contract, including some or all of the following: blueprint copies of letting plans, grouped into sets which contain many different forms of material; original maps, drawings, or tracings done on architect's linen; hand drawn plans or diagrams done on graphing paper; preliminary specifications, both handwritten and print annotated; and printed contract specifications.

Most of these groups of material have a contract number written on them, usually on the back side of the final sheet in the group. There is no discernible pattern or sequence to the internal arrangement. Dates vary; sometimes material of more recent date appears first.

The blueprint materials are predominantly plans made up of several individual sheets. Each sheet has several kinds of distinct graphic representations within the boundary of its single neat line. The treatments usually include one or more maps, profiles, details, sketches, cross sections, or charts of borings and excavations. The combinations of these forms on each sheet varies, but each usually carries a unique title, scale (usually in inches or feet), and notes. The blueprints have a standard block, which is filled in to varying degrees, containing the signatures and date that were submitted by the Division Engineer to the State Engineer and Surveyor; signature and date of examination and approval by the State Engineer and Surveyor (or Deputy); and signature of clerk and date adopted by resolution of the Canal Board (apparently for changes to plans).

The various graphic treatments in the plans typically cover: particulars of a job site (e.g., elevations), type of structure (e.g., bridges), or areas where work is to be undertaken; markers or other orientation aids (e.g., location of bolts set in masonry); type of material or condition of soil involved (e.g., timber or stone aprons); and proposed improvements to existing canal feeders or to specific structures (e.g., sewer lines, steel bulkheads, cement tile culverts, bridge abutments, vertical stone walls).

Original maps, drawings and tracings on architect's linen are sometimes found mixed in with blueprints. They are all hand drawn in ink and often in color, sometimes with pencilled annotations. As with the blueprints, several distinct treatments are found per sheet. For example, a general plan, a section, and a side elevation can occupy three areas on a single sheet within one neat line. Sometimes a contract number, title, location, and date, all apparently applying to the sheet as a whole, are provided in a corner. Sometimes initials that

are apparently those of a preparer are also given. Depending on the work depicted these representations may include information such as high water marks, location of the old and new canal bottom, condition of base rock and foundation and the improvements made to them, and a comparison of old to new construction (e.g., new wall, old wall) usually set off in colored inks. These items are unique in that they all contain at least one map among the mix of graphic representations of sections and profiles. Title, date, and scale information is present in each case and varies from sheet to sheet. They have been identified by contract number in pencil on the back, and sometimes have a separate identification by title and date there as well.

The specifications include advertising notices, copies of a general contract, and other printed documents, usually including a list of quantities exhibited and propositions received. There are also a few preliminary estimates. Some of these are done entirely by hand; others are handwritten on printed tabulation sheets, the column headings and inked figures of which are sometimes additionally annotated in pencil or colored ink.

Maps found in the series are strictly for location purposes, showing the place work is to be done or the site of proposed construction or improvement. In the blueprints they are sometimes combined on the same sheet with various profiles or side elevations of particular canal stations, the locations of which are shown on the accompanying map. Title, date, and scale information is present on each and varies from sheet to sheet. In general maps name streets and waterways and show outlines of buildings in an area. They rarely have a directional symbol. Some items on architect's linen contain at least one map, and sometimes maps covering several contracts appear on one extended sheet. The longest of these measures 35 x 260 cm. They are done in ink and often in color. The maps are generally a bit more detailed than those found with the blueprint plans. In addition to section of canal/feeder and work sites and structures, these maps sometimes show the blue line of the canal (state owned property), buildings specifically labeled as to type of business (e.g., store, barber, mill, etc.) and sometimes the name of businesses or property owners.

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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 this material.

Administrative Information

Custodial History

In January 1989, 13 rolled single items that had been previously unidentified and unaccessioned since their transfer to the Archives were identified and added to this series by Archives staff.

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Access Terms

- Diagrams
- Erie Canal (N.Y.)
- Sectional perspectives
- Plans (orthographic projections)
- Profiles
- Maps (documents)
- New York (State)
- Maintaining infrastructure
- Constructing canals
- Contracts for work and labor--New York (State)
- Location maps
- Canals--New York (State)
- Canals--Design and construction
- Oswego Canal (N.Y.)
- New York (State). Department of Transportation