



New York State Archives

**New York State Engineer and Surveyor Sectional Canal
Survey Maps of the 1895 Improvement of the Erie Canal
B0396**

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Overview of the Records

Repository:	New York State Archives
Summary:	This series consists of detailed sectional maps dating from the 1895 improvement of the Erie Canal. Maps show property and buildings fronting the canal and land tracts on either side of the canal. Information includes property lines and owners; previous canal alignments; locations of ditches, washes, and state land; condition of land; land cultivation and use; natural bodies of water; roads, highways, and railroad platforms and tracks; businesses; and dwellings.
Creator:	New York (State). State Engineer and Surveyor
Title:	Sectional canal survey maps of the 1895 improvement of the Erie Canal
Quantity:	12 cubic feet
Quantity:	9 maps
Inclusive Date:	1896-1897
Series:	B0396

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Arrangement

Numerical by section number.

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Scope and Content Note

The series consists of sectional maps dating from the 1895 improvement of the Erie Canal. The Erie, Champlain, and Oswego canals were enlarged and improved by authority of Chapter 79 of the Laws of 1895. The State Engineer and Surveyor was in charge of determining the extent of each piece of work, and of conducting surveys undertaken in response to that law. These maps are apparently the product of the surveys, and were apparently made to help determine the best method of accomplishing the improvement.

Work on the Erie Canal involved deepening the canal to nine feet of water, except over and across aqueducts, culverts, and other permanent structures, in which case the water depth would be at least eight feet. The deepening was to be performed by raising the banks whenever practicable, and the law also provided for building vertical stone walls when necessary, as well as lengthening or improving locks. All work was to be done in accordance with plans prepared and approved by the State Engineer and Surveyor. The maps are highly detailed, and they may in fact be the preliminary survey maps from which subsequent Barge Canal sectional maps were made. These maps (section numbers 8 through 12, which pertain solely to the Erie Canal) are the only sections extant.

The maps show property and buildings fronting the canal, and considerable tracts of land extending on either sides of the canal. The maps are extremely valuable for their amount of detail. Information includes: property lines and names of owners and estates; previous canal alignments, locations of ditches and washes, and land along the waterway belonging to New York State; condition of the land (e.g., swamps, clearings, and woodlands, even to the level of "mostly cedar" trees); land cultivation and use (e.g., orchards, groves, vineyards, gravel beds) natural bodies of water (e.g., lakes, streams, ponds); streets, roads (some marked as "private"), highways, and railroad platforms and tracks; dwellings and accompanying out-buildings (e.g., houses, barns, stables, sheds); and businesses and storage sites (e.g., ice houses, breweries, plaster mills, lumber yards, savings banks, gas works, coal piles, blast furnaces).

The preliminary nature of these maps is indicated by the use of pencil throughout. They are hand drawn and have red inked lines (designating the inner line of the towpath) and a blue crayon shading along the canal waterway. The five rolls into which these nine maps had previously been rolled cover five separate sections of the Erie Canal. At one time all or some of the rolls had handwritten identifications, but the extremely brittle condition of the maps has caused extensive flaking and tearing which has obliterated much of the writing. However, the metal canisters that previously housed the rolls labeled them clearly (sometimes on masking tape and sometimes on pasted printed labels) as being part of the Improvement of 1895, as pertaining to work done on the Erie Canal, and by a section number. Although the extreme fragility of the maps precludes unrolling some of them, there is apparently no title, date, scale, legend, or other information on their production on the face of the maps.

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Related Information

Related Material

B0253Series B0253, Barge Canal Sectional Maps, contains records that may have been prepared from maps in this series.

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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

Restricted: Material extremely fragile; use under supervision of State Archives staff due to fragile condition. Roll 2 should not be unrolled per State Archives conservation staff.

Alternate Formats AvailableAlternate Formats Available

Map of Section 10 only, corresponding to map roll number 3: Available on microfilm; Erie Canal Museum, Syracuse, New York.

Access Terms

- Erie Canal (N.Y.)
- Canals--New York (State)
- Manuscript maps
- New York (State)
- Maps (documents)
- Maintaining infrastructure
- New York State Barge Canal System (N.Y.)
- Canals--Design and construction
- Constructing canals
- New York (State). Department of Transportation