



*New York State Archives*

**New York State Engineer and Surveyor Engineers' Field  
Books Pertaining to the Construction of the State's Canal  
System B0730**

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## Overview of the Records

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<b>Repository:</b>	New York State Archives
<b>Summary:</b>	This series consists mainly of field books compiled in the field while surveying, constructing, or maintaining the State's canal system. Topics addressed include land ownership and property valuations; property monuments; topography; proposed layouts; bridge inspections; highway locations; daily progress; property deeds; and town and state boundary line surveys. In addition to notes and measurements, many of the field books contain inventories; reports and observations; sketches of various areas and building measurements; property valuations; and deed descriptions.
<b>Creator:</b>	New York (State). State Engineer and Surveyor
<b>Title:</b>	Engineers' field books pertaining to the construction of the State's canal system
<b>Quantity:</b>	335.15 cubic feet
<b>Inclusive Date:</b>	1830-1960
<b>Series:</b>	B0730

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## Arrangement

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B0730-10, B0730-22: Unarranged.

B0730-16: Arranged by three geographical regions, then numerical by volume number.

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## Administrative History

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The 20th-century Erie Barge Canal incorporated parts of the older system, particularly in New York State Department of Transportation Region 2. These include the Adirondack Northern Reservoirs (and the associated Black River Canal sections), the Madison County Southern

Reservoirs (and the associated Chenango Canal sections) and a still-watered portion of the 19th-century Erie Canal west of New London (used as a feeder).

In 1992 the State's canal offices were transferred from the New York State Department of Transportation [NYSDOT] to the New York State Thruway Authority. In 2017, oversight of the canal offices was transferred from the Thruway to the New York Power Authority. The Thruway Authority regions were Albany, Syracuse and Buffalo. The office in Utica was closed. The records that were in the Utica State Office Building were sent to Syracuse and integrated with those of the canal office from NYSDOT Region 3 (Syracuse), which also had to relocate from the Syracuse State Office Building to Thruway headquarters nearby. The records became very scattered among canal and Thruway properties. Eventually, the field books (both Utica's and Syracuse's) were housed in the canal shops at Lysander.

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## Scope and Content Note

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This series consists mainly of field books. Canal engineers and employees apparently used the term "field books" to refer to various types of notes, measurements, etc. compiled in the field while surveying, constructing, or maintaining the State's canal system. The field books contain notes on numerous topics such as land ownership and property valuations; spoil bank elevations; property monuments; culvert stations; prism soundings; railroad embankments; transit points; situation surveys and topography; foundation piles; original abutments; centerlines; flowlines; preliminary surveys; river straightening lines; proposed layouts; bridge inspections; highway locations; contract prices; accidents; weather and water heights; work performance and daily progress; property deeds; bridge abutments; dry river surveys; blue and red line surveys; and town and State boundary line surveys. Somewhat similar to these notes are measurements recording dimensions of buildings and canal structures; water gage readings; ditches; lock levels; sluices; cross banks; spoil sections; prism embankments; and vertical velocities of the Mohawk River.

In addition to the notes and measurements, many of the field books contain such information as inventories and sketches of electrical equipment used for specific canal contracts; engineers' observations; Barge Canal terminal foundation plans; structural specifications; ditch profiles; original, monthly, and final cross sections; original prism and surface cross sections; final accounts; and diagrams, sketches, profiles, and drawings of various areas and canal structures, some remarkably detailed.

Filed with these field books are records such as engineers' daily reports; monthly construction estimate notes; order and alteration books; sketch books; building measurements; property valuations; employment time books and work force accounts; bridge inspection notes; engineers' diaries; Barge Canal monthly contract estimates; canal collectors' toll and certificate books; and deed descriptions.

Accretion B0730-94 consists of 107 field books which have particularly useful surveys and property information relative to the Erie Canal and enlargement in the central Mohawk Valley (e.g. the Schoharie Crossing). Of special note is one field book which is a mid-nineteenth century catalog of canal manuscripts. Accretion B0730-03, consisting of approximately 514 volumes, documents maintenance of sections one and two of the Barge Canal, ca. 1906-1959. Field books in accretion B0730-10 document construction of the Champlain Barge Canal through land and river surveys and contract notes. Also documented are some of the Champlain's ancillary features such as the Junction Lock at Fort Edward, the terminals at Whitehall and Port Henry, and the Stillwater Reservoir. Field books in accretion B0730-14, numbered 52, 57, and 61, document the Stillwater Reservoir, formerly known as the Beaver River.

Accretion B0730-15 consists of a volume of field notes providing technical information on the Little Falls Canal, including measurements on embankment levels, towpaths, and levels (elevations); purchases of wood and oil for engine; miscellaneous calculations; drawing of a lock; and drawings of Glens Falls Feeder, which are inserted. Also inserted is "Docking at Albany, Memorandum of Work at Albany Little Basin, June 15, 1838," which contains information about dates that pavement was replaced, excavation occurred, dock and lock were built, and bridge was raised. Also included is data on weight of anchors; account of masons, carpenters, teams, and laborers; and materials used (e.g., sand, pine timber).

B0730-16: Many of the field books in this accretion are for the surveys of the Northern and Southern Reservoirs from the mid-19th century. The Utica field books continue well into the post-World War II period. Of particular interest is the 1830 survey for what becomes the Black River Canal (the first such formal survey) done and signed by the canal surveyor, Holmes Hutchinson.

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## Related Information

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### Related Material

Series A1078 Canal Engineer's Field Notes for state canals contains records produced from the field books in this series.

Series B0253 Barge Canal Sectional Maps contains records produced from the field books in this series.

Series B1908 Card Index to Canal Records indexes this series.

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## Other Finding Aids

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### Available at Repository

B0730-16: The Utica field books are indexed by Series B2075. Portions of the Utica and Syracuse fieldbooks are indexed by Series B1908.

B0730-16: Container list is available at the repository.

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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.

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## Administrative Information

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### Acquisition Information

B0730-10: This accretion was transferred by the canal section office at Waterford, N.Y.

B0730-15: This volume was transferred to the State Archives by the Office of General Services Bureau of Land Management in 2012 as part of a project to identify bureau records with archival value.

B0730-22: This accretion was transferred to the New York State Archives by the State Canal Corporation in 2016.

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## Access Terms

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- Little Falls (N.Y.)
- Champlain Canal (N.Y.)
- Erie Canal (N.Y.)

- Canals--New York (State)--Design and construction
- Field notes
- New York (State)
- Maintaining infrastructure
- Constructing canals
- New York (State). Surveyor General
- New York (State). Department of Transportation