



New York State Archives

**New York State Engineer and Surveyor Maps and Profiles
Relating to the Western Division of the Erie and Barge Canals
B1211**

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Overview of the Records

Repository:	New York State Archives
Summary:	This series consists of maps, profiles, cross sections, description sheets, and other information documenting work proposed and carried out during the enlargement and improvement of the Western Division of the Erie Canal. Included is proposed work on sections of the lateral canals of the Barge Canal system, especially the Genesee Valley. Maps often note property lines and owners, cultivated land; and significant buildings/structures. Records are restricted due to fragility.
Creator:	New York (State). State Engineer and Surveyor
Title:	Maps and profiles relating to the Western Division of the Erie and Barge canals
Quantity:	36 cubic feet
Quantity:	240 maps
Inclusive Date:	1830-1915
Series:	B1211

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Arrangement

Boxes 1-11 contain numbered maps. Boxes 12-17 contain maps arranged by contract. Boxes 18-38 contain maps given an assigned number.

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Scope and Content Note

The series contains maps, profiles, cross sections, description sheets, and other information documenting work proposed and carried out during the enlargement and improvement of the Western Division of the Erie Canal. Included is proposed work on sections of the lateral canals of the Barge Canal system, especially the Genesee Valley Canal.

The State Engineer and Surveyor had responsibility for planning, construction and maintenance of the state's canals, and these records were created in response to various legislative mandates to survey land, plan routes, estimate costs, and document canal work (and damages incurred) as it was contracted and carried out. The series is a mix of manuscript maps, tracings, and blueprint copies; the presence of copies rolled together with originals indicates that these may have been used as working copies, although annotations are neither frequent nor extensive.

The work depicted spans many years in the development of the state's canal system, from the time of the first canal enlargement, the "Nine Million Dollar Improvement" of 1895, and the final construction phase on what became the Barge Canal. There is also a 1908 index map of a 1900 survey showing positions and numbering of maps of the Western Division. The following types of material are present in the series: blueline maps and profiles, especially of the Barge Canal system, which indicate the boundaries of state owned lands and which were apparently drawn to establish rights of way; baseline (red line) maps of the canal, drawn to measure distances along the length of the canal line; survey maps (some labeled "Additional Survey") sometimes using contour lines, for various canal sections and feeders and including profiles, triangulations, and/or cross sections; topographical maps of lowlands, highwaters, bodies of water, and some canal sites (e.g., a blueprint copy of a contour map of the Genesee Valley Park); topographical survey maps showing cultivation of land (meadow, pasture, etc.) often with acreage (added as red inked annotations), and indications of canal related damage (e.g., "beans--spoiled"; "barley damaged"; "bridge washed away"; "no damage"); numerous profiles, especially of the Genesee Valley Canal, the Western Division of the Erie Canal, and of proposed canal feeders ranging over several decades;

original description sheets, often with duplicate tracings, of lock, aqueducts, and bridges; and maps and related representations of proposed canal work, often giving details of work (e.g., rebuilding of dams, proposed new channels, relocation of highways, draining projects with layouts and profiles, etc.).

Within these categories the maps may have all or some of the following characteristics: title or description of what is represented, sometimes by type of work, project, or by name/section of canal/feeder or in relation to a particular contract/contractor; scale, usually as ratio of feet to inches; for profiles the vertical and horizontal scale is often given; specific legends or explanations of markings used, especially on profiles; initials/names of persons who made, traced, or checked maps or profiles, sometimes with date; blue lines representing boundaries of state owned land; red lines representing the inner edge of the towpath, and offset lines from which all measurements along the length of the canal were taken; double or dotted red lines representing various proposed changes (e.g., in channel or highway); property and lot lines, and name of estate and/or property owner or heirs; acreage, cultivation of land, significant buildings or canal structures; and references to field notes (by book and page numbers), final estimate books, roll/map numbers and/or contract numbers or citations from which canal lines were taken.

Of special note are the description sheets of aqueducts, locks, and bridges on the Western Division of the Erie Canal. These are hand made tables divided according to section of superstructure and substructure. Information includes name of structure; date built; original

cost; contractor; date inspected; condition; technical specifications of related parts of the superstructure/substructure; roll number of plans and the place filed; book and page number of final estimates; related information (such as names of streams crossed, number of spans, clearances for roadways, etc.); and additional remarks. Each description has both a paper original and an accompanying tracing on architect's linen.

The series reflects the tremendous variety and scope of the canal system it documents. It contains, for example, a profile of the bottom of a ditch; several plans to improve sanitary conditions; cross sections of bridge approaches; a profile of a pipeline with a map showing the location of a dam and the pipe; a map of muck limits (bottom soil in a watercourse removed in excavation); a sheet of borings; an amended map of a portion of the Rochester and Honeoye Valley Railroad; maps showing leakage and proposed drainage systems; and a blueprint showing the location, kind, and diameter of individual trees in the Genesee Valley Park. The records are closely related in time and geography to series B0380, Western Division Canal Maps and Plans, although the emphasis in this series is on maps and profiles rather than plans.

Occasionally extra sheets are present that contain obviously informal sketches and/or random calculations. Originals are drawn in both color inks and pencil on paper. Profiles are often done in pencil on graphing paper. Tracings are often colored identically to the originals to which they are related.

Size varies widely. Some profiles are done on continuous roll profile paper; one measures 29 cm high with a rolled diameter of 11 cm. A sample of maps measured ranged in size from 41 x 61 cm to 91 x 1,036 cm.

The records are indexed in a separate card file (series A4290, Card Index to Western Division Canal Maps, Plans, Estimates, and Related Structures). It appears that there is no single section of the index that applies solely to this series. It is sometimes difficult to ascertain which category of the index applies to the various types of material covered in the series, and it is by no means certain that all the original index cards are extant or that all items present in the series can be found through the index. The "roll maps" section of the index seems to pertain directly to this series, although some references were located elsewhere in the index.

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Related Information

Related Material

A4290Series A4290, Card Index to Western Division Canal Maps, Plans, Estimates, and Related Structures, indexes this series.

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Use of Records

Access Restrictions

Restricted due to fragile condition (brittle): use only with assistance of State Archives staff.

Access Terms

- Contour maps
- Aqueducts
- Locks (Hydraulic engineering)
- Erie Canal (N.Y.)
- Bridges--Design and construction
- Genesee Valley Park (N.Y.)
- Profiles
- Maps (documents)
- New York (State)
- New York State Barge Canal System (N.Y.)
- Maintaining infrastructure
- New York (State)--Western New York
- Constructing canals
- Index maps
- Topographic maps
- Cross sections
- Canals--New York (State)
- Canals--Design and construction
- Genesee Valley Canal (N.Y.)
- New York (State). Department of Transportation