



New York State Archives

**New York State Division of Canals and Waterways Plans,
Maps, and Specifications Relating to Various Barge Canal
Contracts B1213**

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Overview of the Records

Repository:	New York State Archives
Summary:	These records relate to contracted work on the Barge Canal involving constructing or repairing dams, storage reservoirs, or canal terminals; channel excavation; or bridge improvement. A few maps and tracings of the Syracuse area show encroachment on the Erie Canal and state-owned land desired by private concerns. The plans, primarily blueprint copies, include profiles, cross sections, location maps, elevations, layouts, typical sections, or sectional drawings.
Creator:	New York (State). Division of Canals and Waterways
Title:	Division of Canals and Waterways plans, maps, and specifications relating to various Barge Canal contracts
Quantity:	12 cubic feet
Quantity:	52 rolls
Inclusive Date:	1895-1935
Bulk Date:	1910-1935
Series:	B1213

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Arrangement

Arranged by unidentified alpha-numeric file number.

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Scope and Content Note

The series consists of 52 rolls of plans, maps, and specifications relating to selected work on the Barge Canal system contracted by the Department of Public Works. The series is a sporadic documentation of canal contracts spanning several decades; there is no readily apparent rationale for this specific grouping of plans and related documents.

The Barge Canal Law (Laws of 1903, Chapter 147) mandated that all work for the repair and improvement of the canals was to be done by contract. Contracts were to be entered into by the Superintendent of Public Works, after the work was advertised according to a specific formula, and copies of maps, plans, and specifications were to be filed in that office and publicly exhibited to every person proposing or desiring to make a proposal for such work. These records are from the files kept at the Division of Canals and Waterways, apparently for that purpose.

The plans are generally blueprint copies that include one or more profiles, cross sections, location maps, elevations, layouts, typical sections or sectional drawings for the contracted work. The work usually relates to building or repairing dams, storage reservoirs, or canal terminals, channel excavation, rock and spoil bank protection, dredging of piers, or bridge improvement at many locations along the canal line. In addition there are a few early manuscript maps and tracings (ca. 1908-1909) from the Syracuse area that show encroachment on the Erie Canal and some areas of state-owned land desired by private concerns.

Plans and related material are grouped together under one alpha-numeric number forming discrete "sets" in which the number and type of documents vary. Some such sets include a title sheet consisting of a location map of New York State, showing the site of the contract as well as the contract number and title, the citation of the appropriations law authorizing the work, and an extensive printed examination and approval block signed and dated by various state engineers and officials. In such cases the location map itself has a scale of miles and a legend explaining existing and abandoned canals, canal feeders, and the route of the Barge Canal. A newspaper clipping of the notice to contractors from the Division of Canals and Waterways is sometimes pasted to the location map. This advertising notice gives the date and place for admission of sealed proposals, the contract number and description, and the place where pertinent plans and forms for proposals could be obtained (i.e., the Division offices).

A few groups include attached copies of typed correspondence, usually transmittal letters sent to district or consulting engineers notifying them of approval of applications. Similarly a few sets include a printed copy of information for proposers, prepared by the Division of Canals and Waterways. This includes an estimate of quantities, the form for proposal and specifications, and reference to the number of pages in accompanying drawings. It usually provides the contract number and title, letting date (sometimes by an office stamp), a citation of the relevant appropriations law, and the full text copy of the legal notice for sealed proposals on the contract.

A printed block appears in the lower left corner of some plans giving the signature and date of those responsible for making, tracing, and checking the particular drawing. Most rolls are identified by pencilled titles, contract numbers, dates, and an unidentified alpha-numeric file code number on the outside of the roll. Some are also date stamped. The file numbers do not follow in strict order, and it is unclear if these plans have been alienated from an unknown but more complete file, or were deliberately set aside for some special purpose, or are remnants of a lost file.

With few exceptions all documents are blueprint copies. Maps are found at the fore of the sets on separate title sheets, or are included for purposes of location on various plans and drawings. A few maps appear as separate tracings, usually dated in the early 1900s, showing the blue line (state owned land) of the Erie Canal. The scales of the maps vary and are given in chains, inches or miles; both vertical and horizontal scale is given for some sectional drawings. The legends and presence of explanatory remarks for both maps and other drawings also vary. Sizes range from 21.5 x 33 cm to 91.5 x 304 cm, with the standard blueprint size being 61 x 94 cm. In most cases both maps and other plan drawings are clearly bordered by neat lines.

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Related Information

Related Material

B0213Series B0213, Barge Canal Contract Files, contains records concerned with the implementation and administration of Barge Canal contracts.

Related Publications

Annual Reports for the Dept. of Public Works, available at the New York State Library, contain a description of contracts, the date bids were received, and the amount of contract awards.

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Use of Records

Access Restrictions

There are no restrictions regarding access to or use of this material.

Access Terms

- Sectional perspectives
- Plans (orthographic projections)
- Canals--Maintenance and repair
- Maps (documents)

- New York (State)
- New York State Barge Canal System (N.Y.)
- Maintaining infrastructure
- Location maps
- Letting of contracts
- Blueprints
- Contracting canal construction
- Contracts for work and labor
- Canals--Design and construction
- New York (State). State Engineer and Surveyor
- New York (State). Department of Transportation