



New York State Archives

**New York State Division of Canals and Waterways Maps of
Portions of Canal Lands Belonging to the State of New York
B1761**

New York State Archives
222 Madison Avenue
Albany, NY 12230
archref@nysed.gov
URL: <http://www.archives.nysed.gov/>

Table of Contents

Overview of the Records	3
Arrangement	3
Administrative History	3
Scope and Contents	4
Related Information	5
Other Finding Aids	5
Use of Records	6
Administrative Information	6
Access Terms	6

Overview of the Records

Repository:	New York State Archives
Summary:	This series consists of approximately 1900 original linen maps produced by the State Engineer and Surveyor. The maps are popularly known as "Blue Line," "Laws of 1910 Maps," and "Abandonment Maps." The maps depict all state owned lands and property prior to improvements completed for the Barge Canal System; the location of state property appropriated for the Barge Canal; and the location of the old canals and related state property in relation to the Barge Canal.
Creator:	New York (State). Division of Canals and Waterways
Title:	Maps of portions of canal lands belonging to the State of New York
Quantity:	26 cubic feet
Quantity:	(circa 1900 maps)
Inclusive Date:	[circa 1910]-1951
Series:	B1761

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Arrangement

Arranged by canal and therein by portfolio number.

Maps in each portfolio are arranged numerically by sheet number. Access to the maps is gained through a key map which shows portfolio letters for the entire Barge Canal system, which is collectively comprised of the Champlain, Oswego, Cayuga and Seneca, and Erie canals.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Administrative History

These original blue line maps were executed as a result of State Engineer and Surveyor Frank P. Williams' insistence that new surveys were needed to document state land claims. Arguing

in 1909 that since the state owned valuable property within the old canal blue lines and that the description of much adjoining property depended on them, Williams pointed out that it would be almost impossible to retrace the former blue lines after old canal banks and structures were eradicated during the construction of the proposed Barge Canal. The resulting confusion in land ownership rights would necessitate lengthy and expensive legal contests.

Chapter 199, Laws 1910, and its amendment in Chapter 51, Laws 1917, directed the State Engineer and Surveyor to make the necessary surveys, field notes and manuscript maps of all the portions of the Erie, Oswego, and Champlain Canals which were not within the lines of the "improved" or Barge Canal System and as they existed before the advent of the Barge Canal System; boundaries of all adjacent and connected State lands, as well as the names of private owners of existing lands, were designated on the maps. Completed maps were filed with the Canal Board; originals were then filed in the office of the State Engineer and Surveyor and signed and certified white print copies of the maps were filed with the Office of the Comptroller, the Secretary of State, and the Superintendent of Public Works.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Scope and Content Note

This series consists of approximately 1900 original linen maps produced by the State Engineer and Surveyor pursuant to Chapter 199, Laws of 1910 and Chapter 51, Laws of 1917. The maps are popularly known as "Blue Line," "Laws of 1910 Maps" and "Abandonment Maps." Although the enabling statute was passed in 1910, the bulk of the maps date from 1917-1918. The maps depict all state owned lands and property prior to improvements effected for the Barge Canal System; the location of state property appropriated for the Barge Canal; and the location of the old canals and related state property in relation to the Barge Canal. The maps show Barge Canal references only where the Barge Canal intersects the old canal right-of-way. The maps are referred to as "Blue Line Maps" because state owned property along canals traditionally has been designated by a blue line beginning with Holmes Hutchinson's 1834 maps that were executed prior to the first enlargement of the Erie Canal.

The maps usually depict the full red line, which represents the inner angle of the canal tow path prior to about 1869 and was the base line of surveys prior to that date. The full blue line is the outer limit of the State property prior to the Barge Canal Improvement, and the broken blue line outside the full blue line shows the location of state property appropriated for Barge Canal improvement or the route of the 1825 Erie Canal where the Enlarged Erie diverted from it. Interior broken blue lines indicate the former limits of state property. The blue line on the maps was located by the 1834 or subsequent maps or surveys.

Also depicted are the inner angles of the tow paths on the old canal; property owned by the state prior to Barge Canal construction; property appropriated by the state for the Barge Canal project; the former limits of state property; locations of the old canal lines; the location of the proposed Barge Canal; and various structures, roads, streets, and other landmarks and the names of owners of private property adjacent to the canal. Maps have full titles, including

reference to authorizing legislation and signed and dated attestations of examination and approval by officials of the office of the State Engineer and Surveyor and the Canal Board. Maps measure 55 x 84 cm within neat lines. Portfolios have a cover sheet that includes a description of methods used in locating and drawing lines for state owned lands, and various blocks (signed and dated by respective officials) attesting to submitting, certifying, and filing the maps. Portfolio size is 59 x 93 cm.

This series also includes approximately 900 white prints of the Blue Line Maps. These white prints effectively served as office copies to annotate property and ownership changes. Abandoned lands are marked in red; parcels, file transfers and additional azimuths and distances are marked in pen.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Related Information

Related Material

A0867Series A0867, Whiteprint Copies of Maps of Portions of Canal Lands Belonging to the State of New York, contains the whiteprint copies that were originally filed with the State Comptroller's Office

B0252Series B0252, Whiteprint Copies of Maps of Portions of Canal Lands Belonging to the State of New York, contains the copies that were originally filed with the Secretary of State and

B2543Series B2543, Inventory of Canal "Blue Line" Maps, functions as an index to this series.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Other Finding Aids

Available at Repository

Folder list is available at the repository.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Use of Records

Access Restrictions

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

Alternate Formats AvailableAlternate Formats Available

Also available on aperture cards; at the New York State Canal Corporation.

Administrative Information

Custodial History

This series was transferred to the State Archives from the New York State Canal Corporation via the State Museum and accessioned in February 2001.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Access Terms

- Canals--Law and legislation--New York (State)
- Champlain Canal (N.Y.)
- Land use maps
- Erie Canal (N.Y.)
- Right of way--New York (State)
- Maps (documents)
- New York State Barge Canal System (N.Y.)
- Maintaining infrastructure
- Black River Canal (N.Y.)
- Cayuga and Seneca Canal (N.Y.)
- Canals--New York (State)--Design and construction
- Land tenure--New York (State)
- Managing land use
- Oswego Canal (N.Y.)
- Land use--New York State Canal System (N.Y.)
- New York (State). Canal Board
- New York (State). Department of Transportation
- New York State Canal Corporation

- **New York (State). State Engineer and Surveyor**