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Overview of the Records

Repository: New York State Archives

Summary: This series contains original deeds or releases to the State of New York, leases from the state to private individuals or business firms, certified copies of deeds to the United States for government facilities (including cessions of jurisdiction for military and naval installations), and easements for Federal flood control projects. The form of the deed, lease, or release varies considerably throughout the series, but all such documents state the exact boundaries and quantity of land (or the rights in land) conveyed.

Creator: New York (State). Department of State

Title: New York State Department of State original deeds and title papers

Quantity: 16 cubic feet

Quantity: 40 volumes

Inclusive Date: 1855-1975

Series: A0464

Arrangement

Chronological by filing date.

Administrative History

Laws of 1899, Ch. 242, and later amendments, and Laws of 1909, Ch. 59, Art. 4, Section 52, required that a certified copy of the deed be filed with the Secretary of State. Acquisitions of property for military and naval facilities and for lighthouses were accompanied by a release or cession of jurisdiction over the parcel to the United States by the governor of New York. Cession of jurisdiction to the U.S. was authorized by Laws of 1896, Ch. 391.
Scope and Content Note

This series contains original deeds or releases to the State of New York, leases from the state to private individuals or business firms, certified copies of deeds to the United States for government facilities (including cessions of jurisdiction for military and naval installations), and easements for Federal flood control projects. The majority of the documents filed from the turn of the century through World War II are for real property acquired by U.S. government agencies from private parties for post offices, customs houses, lighthouses, hospitals, military and naval facilities, and other public buildings. Deeds to the U.S. usually include maps or plats (tracings, blueprints, whiteprints, or photostats) of the parcel conveyed.

Along with the deeds to the U.S. government are appointments of agents to file and record certified copies of the deeds, and certificates of filing of the original deeds by the appropriate Federal agencies. The deeds document major Federal post office construction programs during the early twentieth century and during the Great Depression, and the construction or expansion of military and naval facilities during World War II. The series also contains some deeds or releases to New York State for property acquired for facilities such as hospitals, normal schools, and fish hatcheries.

The series also includes a few conveyances to the state executed pursuant to special statutes. These include deeds of partition of Adirondack Forest Preserve lands, made pursuant to Laws of 1892, Chap. 488 (this act allowed the state and a private party to partition lands without a court action); and deeds for New York monuments at the battlefields of Antietam, Vicksburg, and Chattanooga, erected by the New York State Monuments Commission pursuant to Laws of 1895, Chap. 317. (Most Civil War battlefield monument title papers are found in series A0468.) Accompanying the deeds to New York State and to the United States are related documents concerning title to the property conveyed.

These documents include correspondence; abstracts of title; certificates of title; certificates of searches for judgment and tax liens upon the property; Comptroller's certificates of taxes due and receipts for payment of the same; transcripts of mortgage foreclosure, partition, or condemnation proceedings affecting title; satisfactions of mortgages; quit-claim deeds; and releases of dower rights. Also found in this series are documents relating to the cession by Massachusetts to New York of the "Boston Corner" in 1855; and new surveys of the New York-Connecticut boundary line made pursuant to Laws of 1880, Chap. 213, and Laws of 1913, Chap. 18. Other documents filed in this series around the turn of the twentieth century are deeds to the state from private parties for exchange of lands within the Adirondack Forest Preserve; and transcripts of land appropriation proceedings initiated by the Forest Purchasing Board pursuant to Laws of 1897, Chap. 220. Starting around 1930 there are releases from the state to private parties of lands which had escheated to the state through lack of heirs or devisees to decedents' property (Abandoned Property Law, Art. 1 and Section 208); and leases...
of state property (particularly Barge Canal lands) for industrial or commercial uses (Public Lands Law, Section S.2).

The final category of conveyances filed in this series concerns leases of state lands under water and easements of lands for Federal flood control projects. Starting in 1919 there are many releases to the state of previous grants of lands under water. These releases were made in anticipation of new leases for "restricted beneficial enjoyment" of certain rights in lands under water (Public Lands Law, Section 78). Most of the releases convey lands under the Hudson River and under waters in and around the city of Greater New York.

Also filed here are licenses to dredge sand and gravel from lands under water and to operate scows or other vessels for this purpose. These licenses are granted and filed by the Secretary of State’s office pursuant to Laws of 1933, Chap. 539, and a resolution of the Board of Commissioners of the Land Office dated Apr. 17, 1934. The series contains many certified copies of perpetual easements from the state of New York to the United States for properties acquired for Federal flood control projects (dams, dikes, channel straightening). Most of these projects were undertaken in the Southern Tier communities of Binghamton, Elmira, and Hornell after the flood of 1935. Easements were acquired by the state and conveyed to the U.S. pursuant to Laws of 1936, Chap. 862, and amendments. The last book in the series contains title documents for lands taken by the U.S. government for the Kinzua Reservoir in Cattaraugus County.

Finally, there are easements given by the state to companies constructing oil or gas pipelines under lands under water, or electrical transmission lines over water over lands under water. Such easements are granted pursuant to Laws of 1953, Chap. 776. The documents in this series through book 36 are in bound volumes. Starting with book 37 they are unbound. The order is usually chronological by filing date, though in books 1-6 some earlier conveyances are found inserted among later ones. The form of the deed, lease, or release varies considerably, but the document always states the exact boundaries and quantity of land (or the rights in land) conveyed.

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Related Information

Related Material

A4688Series A4688, Grantor index to deeds and other miscellaneous documents recorded or filed by the Secretary of State

A4689Series A4689, Grantee index to deeds and other documents recorded or filed by the Secretary of State and Office of General Services

A4690Series A4690, Location index to deeds and other documents recorded or filed by the Secretary of State and Office of General Services
Other Finding Aids

Available at Repository

Most books contain indexes to names of parties to conveyances and to locations of parcels. Books 1 and 4 lack indexes, and Book 5 has only a table of contents. Starting in 1889 most if not all conveyances executed bear references to the book and page in Series 12945, Miscellaneous Deeds and Title Papers, where they were recorded.

Container list.

Use of Records

Access Restrictions

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

Access Terms

• Recording
• Monitoring
• Land titles
• Deeds
• New York (State)
• Land settlement