



# New York State Archives Guide:

For Family Historians, Biographers,  
and Historical Researchers

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**NYG&B**

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GENEALOGICAL  
AND BIOGRAPHICAL  
SOCIETY

## Hutchinson Maps

This Hutchinson map shows the enlarged Erie Canal at modern Rexford in Clifton Park, Saratoga County (north of the Mohawk River) and in Niskayuna, Schenectady County (south) sometime between September 1829 and 1834.<sup>1</sup> The red line to the north along the canal is the tow path. The blue lines on either side of the canal mark the boundaries of State-owned property—land that had been appropriated to build the canal. The map depicts canal structures such as the canal aqueduct over the Mohawk River, a wing dam that formed a side of the entrance to the feeder canal, the feeder canal, lock nos. 27 and 28, and some basins. It also shows the former site of Alexander's

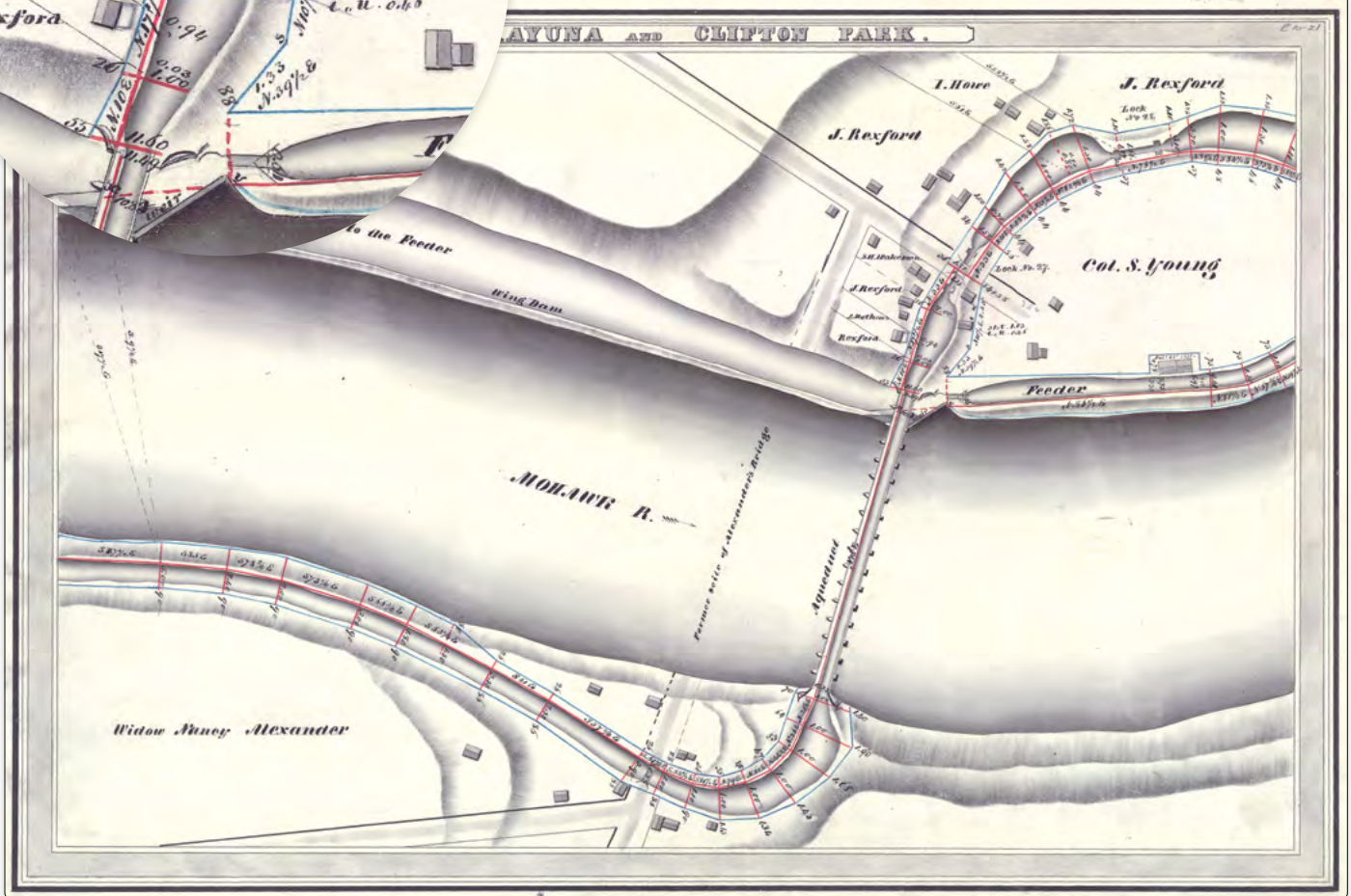
bridge, several roads, and twenty-nine houses, buildings, and other structures. Private property owners adjacent to the canal include Widow Nancy Alexander in Niskayuna and S. [Samuel] Mathews, [?] Rexford, J. [Jemina] Rexford, S.H. [Stephen H.] Wakeman, I. [Isaac] Howe, and Col. S. Young across the river in Clifton Park.<sup>2</sup> These property owners or their families might be found in other canal records—petitioning the Legislature or canal commissioners, field notes, making damage claims, or providing maintenance labor, for example.

Erie Canal, Saratoga and Schenectady counties, between 1829 and 1834; New York (State) Canal Commissioners, Canal System Survey Maps, Series A0848, Map no. E10-21, New York State Archives, Albany, digital image NYSA \_ A0848-77 \_ MC7 \_ DR10 \_ V10 \_ E10 \_ 21, [digitalcollections.archives.nysed.gov/index.php/Detail/objects/43033](https://digitalcollections.archives.nysed.gov/index.php/Detail/objects/43033) [Saratoga, Schenectady]

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- 1 See Michael Riley, "The Story Behind the 1834 Holmes Hutchinson Canal Maps", The American Canal Society, [americancanalsociety.org/1834-holmes-hutchinson-canal-maps](http://americancanalsociety.org/1834-holmes-hutchinson-canal-maps) posted 13 August 2020.
- 2 Inserted first names obtained from Field Books (Series A1078) and/or the 1830 U.S. census.



## Chancery Case File

As the guardian of James Le Ray de Chaumont, an infant (under age), Vincent Le Ray de Chaumont petitioned the Court of Chancery in 1824, asking the chancellor to confirm the sale of land in New York City to Cornelius Heeny. Vincent reported that Cornelia Juhel, widow of John Juhel, a merchant, possessed a life estate in the property under the terms of John's will and that she agreed to join in the sale. Vincent also asked the chancellor to direct the disposition and investment of the proceeds of the sale. The petition was presented to the court by Vincent's attorney, William Slossen. In Jefferson County Vincent gave oath on 30 June 1824 that the petition was his own act and that he believed to be true the acts of other people mentioned in the petition (i.e. Cornelia). Vincent's role as guardian was to protect the minor James's interests in property that James had inherited. To insure that

guardians were acting in the best interests of the minors, guardians were required by law to get permission from the chancellor to sell land. Since Cornelia had ownership interest in the land during her life, her consent to sell was needed as well. It can be surmised that James Le Ray de Chaumont was an heir of John Juhel.

Vincent Le Ray de Chaumont, Petition for confirmation and report of sale, 23 June 1824; New York (State) Court of Chancery, Petition Case Files, 1800–1847, Series J0057, Box 26, D123 Vincent Le Ray de Chaumont, Guardian of James Le Ray de Chaumont, Jefferson County, New York State Archives. [Jefferson]

123.

In Chancery

In the matter of the  
Petition of Vincent  
Le Ray de Chaumont  
Guardian of James  
Le Ray de Chaumont  
minor or infant

Slossen

Petition for Confirma-  
tion Report of sale

Filed July 5. 1824

Your Petitioner therefore prays, that your Honor will be pleased to confirm the sale so made as aforesaid, and your Petitioner as Guardian aforesaid be permitted to execute to the said Cornelius Heeny a Deed for said Lots and Premises in fee - the said Cornelia Juhel (who is the Widow of John Juhel late of the City of New York Merchant now deceased, who formerly owned the said Premises) - being willing to join in a Deed to the Purchaser for the better adjusting the Title - and that your Honor will also be pleased to direct such disposition and investment of the proceeds of such sales, as your Honor may deem proper -

And your Petitioner will ever pray.

Wm Slossen Solicitor General  
for Petitioner

V. Le Ray de Chaumont

State of New York }  
Jefferson County } ss: Vincent Le Ray de Chaumont above named being  
suly sworn says, that what is contained in the foregoing Petition as  
far as concerns his own act and deed is true of his own Knowledge  
and what relates to the act and deed of any other person or persons  
he believes to be true -

Given before me, June 30.  
1824, Chas. C. Deane Com. &c.

V. Le Ray de Chaumont

I do hereby Certify that a Bond has been this day filed in  
my office in all respects conformable to the directions of the  
Inch mentioned in the within Petition - Dated New York  
June 23. 1824 -

Schud Jauncey  
Clerk of the Court

# Chapter 14: Legislative Records

## Overview

New York's constitutions and statutes impact all of its inhabitants. Constitutions are the fundamental principles and laws under which governing bodies govern and statutes are the laws or acts passed by a legislature, establishing the legal framework under which we and our ancestors live and die. This chapter discusses the state's constitutions (briefly) and statutes and their related legislative records.

Statutes are particularly useful to genealogists and other researchers in three distinctly different ways:

- First and most broadly, general statutes govern many aspects of people's lives. For example, they determine who can vote and hold public office, who can own property, who can sue and be sued in court, who must or may serve in the militia, what constitutes a crime, what taxes must be paid, who can make financial claims against the government, and how the estate of a deceased person who dies without a will is administered and distributed. What our ancestors did and did not do was determined, in part, by these general statutes.
- Second and more specifically, general statutes establish requirements for government records and recordkeeping—particularly for the records held by NYSA. Understanding those laws is vital to understanding the records themselves and how to use them.
- Third and most specifically, before the mid-nineteenth century people frequently petitioned the legislature for a variety of reasons, often with a resulting statute—called a private or local act—passed for benefit of a particular individual or class of people, or a local government, or a private corporation. Legislative relief was sought because administrative remedies were few, with the major exception of claims for money damages arising from canal construction and operation. Petitions from men (rarely women, often widows) and groups of people asked for American Revolutionary War annuities or bounty land grants, occasionally grants of land, relief from a legal obligation, or adjustment of the law for some local problem, for example. Among the private acts in the statutes

are naturalizations (before 1790, when the U.S. government assumed jurisdiction), name changes (before 1896, when legislative name changes were prohibited by the 1894 Constitution), extraordinary claims relating to canals, and miscellaneous acts benefiting individuals, such as the right to operate a ferry and some probate matters. Laws establishing business and not-for-profit corporations of all kinds, including churches, were considered private acts. Such legislative incorporations were gradually eliminated after passage of general incorporation statutes, the first enacted in 1811. Private or local bills have been limited by the state constitution since 1847, and today such bills are few.<sup>1</sup>

This chapter on state laws and legislation is organized somewhat chronologically. Legislative records at NYSA begin with those of the Provincial Congress during the early years of the Revolutionary War and continue with the State Constitutions and statutes enacted by the Legislature starting in 1777. They are completed by legislative journals and documents that record the votes and proceedings of the Senate and Assembly to the mid-twentieth century and Assembly and Senate papers that document the interactions of New Yorkers with their government in the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries. The **Special Focus** section highlights two special councils that operated until 1823, Council of Revision and Council of Appointment. For records of the Dutch colony of New Netherland and for records of the British colony of New York, see the [Dutch](#) and [British](#) chapters.

<sup>1</sup> See the State Constitutions of 1846 and 1894 (Art. III, sect. 16, 18) for details on private and local act limitations.