



The New York Public Library
Manuscripts and Archives Division

Guide to the

Commissioners' plan of Manhattan Island and report with related materials

1811, 1935-1936

MssCol 605

Compiled by Susan P. Waide, 2014

Summary

Creator: Commissioners of Streets and Roads in the City of New-York

Title: Commissioners' plan of Manhattan Island and report with related materials

Date: 1811, 1935-1936

Size: .31 linear feet (1 volume, 1 oversized folder)

Source: Received on deposit from the Office of the President of the Borough of Manhattan, City of New York, 1935

Abstract: John Randel, Jr. (1787-1865) was an American surveyor, cartographer and civil engineer. He was secretary and chief surveyor for the commission responsible for laying out streets and roads in the City of New York, as appointed by an act of the New York State Legislature on April 3, 1807. Randel surveyed the island of Manhattan and is credited with creating the resulting map, or plan. The survey is considered the foundational master plan of New York City, superimposing a grid of 155 numbered streets and 12 avenues on the topography of the island to mark its future development northward. The manuscript plan, entitled "A Map of the City of New York by the Commissioners appointed by an act of the Legislature passed April 3rd 1807," is dated March 22, 1811 and bears the signatures and seals of the three commissioners, Gouverneur Morris, Simeon De Witt, and John Rutherfurd, as attested by John Randel, Jr. and Archibald Campbell. It was signed by DeWitt Clinton, Mayor of New York City, on May 4, 1811. The plan is accompanied by the Commissioners' manuscript report containing remarks on the plan, which is similarly signed, dated and attested (13 p., bound). Also present is a New York Public Library scrapbook of correspondence and memoranda relative to the transfer of the plan from the Office of the President of the Borough of Manhattan to the Library, 1935-1936, and its conservation treatment, description and display. It includes a negative photostat of the commissioners' report, as well as two full-size negative photostats of the plan, each mounted on cloth and folded in a pocket portfolio, showing its condition before and after treatment.

Access: Advance notice required.

Conditions Governing Access:

Surrogates must be used in lieu of original plan.

Preferred citation: Commissioners' plan of Manhattan Island and report with related materials, Manuscripts and Archives Division, The New York Public Library

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Custodial History

The plan and report were submitted in triplicate. The present copy was filed with the Mayor and Common Council of New York City. The other copies were filed with the County Clerk of New York County and the Secretary of State in Albany, and are now located in the New York City Municipal Archives and the New York State Bureau of Land Management, respectively.

Key Terms

Subjects

City planning -- New York (State) -- New York -- Maps, Manuscript
Streets -- New York (State) -- New York -- Maps, Manuscript

Geographic Names

Manhattan (New York, N.Y.) -- Maps, Manuscript
New York (N.Y.) -- Maps, Manuscript

Names

Clinton, DeWitt, 1769-1828
De Witt, Simeon, 1756-1834
Lydenberg, Harry Miller, 1874-1960
Paltsits, Victor Hugo, 1867-1952
Randel, John, Jr.
Rutherford, John, 1760-1840
Stokes, I. N. Phelps (Isaac Newton Phelps), 1867-1944
Manhattan (New York, N.Y.). Office of the President

Container List

Commissioners' report and related material 1811, 1935-1936 (Two volumes in one slipcase)

Plan of Manhattan Island 1811