

How to Find Information on Water Supply and Usage

by Christine Bruzzese

Croton Aqueduct reports. In 1842, the Croton Aqueduct opened. Connected to the Croton Dam in upstate New York, the Croton system was the first reliable provider of water to New York City residents. *Minutes of the Aqueduct Commission* and *Reports of the Croton Aqueduct Department* provide information on activities and operations of these agencies. Holdings are from 1856 to 1868 for the *Minutes* and from 1883 to 1909 for the Croton Aqueduct Department materials.

Bureau of Water Supply, Gas and Electricity. This agency existed from 1902 to 1976. *Annual Reports* give details on the structure and maintenance of the water supply system and information on various agency divisions. Statistical appendices offer figures such as consumption of water in New York City, number of water main breaks and costs of the water supply. Holdings are from 1939 to 1976. Other publications such as *Rules and Regulations Governing and Restricting the Use and Supply of Water* (1966) and *Water Supply Facts, Rules, and Regulations* (1948), from the parent agency, Department of Water Supply, Gas and Electricity, may be useful for historical research and statistics.

Department of Environmental Protection. The Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) now oversees water supply and usage for New York City. DEP has published several reports on related topics. Individual records of water meter usage

are not available here nor are internal policies of the agency. Please contact DEP for further assistance. *Universal Metering Program Implementation Program*, prepared in 1976 by DEP, outlines a plan for a metering system of water use for all customers in New York City that was eventually implemented. *New York City 2003 Drinking Water Supply and Quality Report* discusses the conditions of the water system, maintenance and repair operations, and reports on the quality of the drinking water supply. Maps and plans of the sewerage system are **not** available at the City Hall Library. DEP will **not** make this material available to the public **under any circumstances.**

Other Resources. The Water Board sets rates for water and sewer usage. *New York City Water Board: Study of Rates and Charges of Water and Sewer Services* prepared by Arthur Young International in 1987, proposed and analyzed alternative rate structures and methods of charging customers. *Water for Gorham: a History* Gerard T. Keppel and *Liquid Assets: a History of New York City's Water System* by Diane Galosh offer historical background on the development and growth of the city water supply system.

Websites. Department of Environmental Protection maintains a website at www.nyc.gov/dep. Information on the water supply system, water and wastewater rates and maps can be found here. Also, it is a good place to learn more about other DEP functions. Check the Department of Records website at www.nyc.gov/records under "Publications" for recent city agency reports on the topic "Environment."

