

NEW YORK STATE BARGE CANAL, MAIN STREET LIFT BRIDGE  
(ALBION)  
(Erie Canal, Main Street Lift Bridge (Albion))  
Main Street  
Albion  
Orleans County  
New York

HAER NY-488  
*HAER NY-488*

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD  
National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior  
1849 C Street NW  
Washington, DC 20240-0001

## HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD

### NEW YORK STATE BARGE CANAL, MAIN STREET LIFT BRIDGE (ALBION) Erie Canal, Main Street Lift Bridge (Albion)

HAER No. NY-488

**Location:** Main Street, Albion, Orleans County, New York

The Main Street Lift Bridge in Albion is located at latitude: 43.2492508, longitude: -78.1935594. The point represents the control tower and was obtained in 2009. There is no restriction on its release to the public.

**Significance:** Main Street Lift Bridge in Albion, located on the Erie Canal, is a component of the nationally significant New York State Barge Canal. It is one of sixteen such bridges constructed between Fairport and Lockport.

**Description:** The sixteen vertical-lift bridges on the Erie Canal are Warren pony trusses raised by an electrically-driven system of cables, counterweights, and sheaves. As described in the New York State Barge Canal National Register nomination, “the moveable truss is supported by vertical lifting frames at either end. When the bridge is ‘down’ the lifting frames retract into the pits” located behind the bridge abutments. “The bridge is raised by cables that run from fixed anchor points at the top of the pits, down around sheaves at the bottom of the lifting frame, back up to sheaves at the top of the pit, and down to cast concrete counterweights. When the counterweights sink into the pits...the cables pull the lifting frames upward by the sheaves at their lower corners.” Each bridge has a control tower, with the motors and gearing generally located in the pit nearest to the tower.<sup>1</sup>

The vertical-lift bridge carries Main Street over the Erie Canal in Albion.<sup>2</sup> The steel Warren pony truss is 138' long and 18.8' between curbs. The deck is open grate, and the pedestrian walkways flanking the roadway are lined with steel lattice. Steel access stairways at either end of the east side of the bridge have cross-hatch treads and steel lattice railings. The machinery pits behind the concrete abutments are covered with cross-hatch plate covers. A bridge plaque reads: “I.M. Ludington’s Sons Inc. General Contractors, Rochester, N.Y. 1911 Lackawanna Bridge Co. Bridge Builders Buffalo, N.Y.” The bridge is in good condition.

The control tower, located next to the north stairs, is a two-story frame building with a concrete foundation. The building is clad in vinyl siding and has an asphalt-shingled pyramidal roof with a shed addition on the east side. There are modern vinyl casement windows and steel doors. The historic warning bell is still located at the tower, and the structure is in good condition.

Dock walls line the north and south banks of the canal between the Ingersoll Street Lift Bridge (see HAER NY-487) and this one. The concrete north dock wall is heavily spalled, and there is

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<sup>1</sup> Duncan Hay, “New York State Barge Canal,” National Register of Historic Places Registration Form, 2014, Section 7, Pages 21-22.

<sup>2</sup> Description of current conditions is based on a site visit made by the HAER recording team in summer 2009.

encroaching vegetation. Cleats, modern light fixtures, and an asphalt access road line the wall, which is in fair to poor condition. The concrete south dock wall is spalling. There are concrete-filled cast-iron bollards, as well as modern cleats, utility hook-ups, and light fixtures along this wall. A canal park with modern benches and a pavilion are also nearby, and the portion of the wall within the park is topped with pressed concrete hardscaping. The south dock wall is in fair to good condition.

**History:** The Main Street Lift Bridge in Albion was built as part of Contract 62 by I.M. Ludington's Sons, Inc. of Rochester, New York. The contract encompassed enlarging the Erie Canal from Orleans County to 0.16 mile east of Eagle Harbor Bridge (a total distance of 14.15 miles) and building any bridges, culverts, and waste weirs deemed necessary. The bridge was completed and in operation in 1913.<sup>3</sup>

The bridge was rehabilitated in 1984 under Contract 84-5.<sup>4</sup>

**Sources:**

*Annual Report of the State Engineer and Surveyor of the State of New York for the Fiscal Year ended in September 30, 1911, Vol. 1.* Albany: J.B. Lyon Company, 1912.

*Annual Report of the State Engineer and Surveyor of the State of New York for the Fiscal Year ended in September 30, 1912, Vol. 1.* Albany: J.B. Lyon Company, 1913.

*Annual Report of the State Engineer and Surveyor of the State of New York for the Fiscal Year ended in September 30, 1913, Vol. 1.* Albany: J.B. Lyon Company, 1914.

Hay, Duncan. "New York State Barge Canal." National Register of Historic Places Registration Form, 2014.

Maintenance Contracts 1984.

Series B1762, New York State Archives, Albany, New York. "Western Division, Erie Canal, Section 10, Sta. 4421 to Sta. 4450." Approved December 3, 1924, 150.

**Historians:** Laura S. Black and Jami Babb, summer 2009

**Project Information:** The Historic American Engineering Record (HAER) is a long-range program that documents and interprets historically significant engineering sites and structures throughout the United States. HAER is part of Heritage Documentation Programs (Richard O'Connor, Manager), a division of the National Park Service, United States

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<sup>3</sup> *Annual Report of the State Engineer and Surveyor of the State of New York for the Fiscal Year ended in September 30, 1911, Vol. 1* (Albany: J.B. Lyon Company, 1912), 250; *Annual Report of the State Engineer and Surveyor of the State of New York for the Fiscal Year ended in September 30, 1912, Vol. 1* (Albany: J.B. Lyon Company, 1913), 250-51; *Annual Report of the State Engineer and Surveyor of the State of New York for the Fiscal Year ended in September 30, 1913, Vol. 1* (Albany: J.B. Lyon Company, 1914), 313.

<sup>4</sup> Maintenance Contracts 1984.

Department of the Interior. The New York State Barge Canal Survey was undertaken in summer 2009 in cooperation with the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor (ERIE), Beth Sciumeca, Executive Director. Justine Christianson, HAER Historian, and Duncan Hay, ERIE, served as project leaders. The staff of the New York State Canal Corporation provided access to the sites. Craig Williams of the New York State Museum provided research materials and assistance. The HAER field team consisted of Jami Babb and Laura Black.

**Appendix: Images of Current Conditions**



**Image 1:** Main Street Lift Bridge elevation with control tower at right. Field photograph taken by HAER recording team, summer 2009.



**Image 2:** Control tower with bell. Field photograph taken by HAER recording team, summer 2009.