

# **Guide to the Bennet and Ryder families collection ARC.001**

**Finding aid prepared by Catey Farley, with  
additional description in 2010 by Robyn Hjermsstad.**

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Describing Archives: A Content Standard

Brooklyn Historical Society  
February 2009  
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## Summary Information

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<b>Repository</b>	Brooklyn Historical Society
<b>Creator</b>	Bennet, Cornelius W., ca. 1776-ca. 1852
<b>Creator</b>	Bennet, Gitty, b. ca. 1774
<b>Creator</b>	Bennet, Wynant, ca. 1716-ca. 1768
<b>Creator</b>	Bennett, Elley May Ryder
<b>Creator</b>	Lake, Derick, ca. 1720-ca. 1800
<b>Creator</b>	Lake, Derrick, 1765-1832
<b>Creator</b>	Ryder, Charles M., 1844-1917
<b>Creator</b>	Ryder, Gertrude M., 1844-1916
<b>Creator</b>	Stillwell, Jaques I., 1801-ca. 1863
<b>Creator</b>	Stillwell, Jaques J., 1827-1884
<b>Creator</b>	Van Sicklen, Ferdinand, ca. 1801-1849
<b>Creator</b>	Williams, Gertrude Ryder Bennett
<b>Title</b>	Bennet and Ryder families collection
<b>Date [inclusive]</b>	1670-2006
<b>Extent</b>	2.5 Linear feet in 3 manuscript boxes and 1 oversized flat box

**Language**

English

**Language of Materials**

Materials primarily in English, with some documents in Dutch.

**Abstract**

This collection of papers contains historical documents created by the descendants of early English and Dutch settlers in colonial New Amsterdam. The Bennets, Lakes, Stillwells and Van Sicklens were English families who lived in the Netherlands and then emigrated to New Amsterdam in the mid-17th century. William Adrianse Bennet settled Gowanus for the Dutch in 1636, while Jan Lake, Nicholas Stillwell and Dutchman Fernandus Van Sicklen were part of the group that settled the English town of Gravesend with Lady Deborah Moody in 1643. Both of these areas are now part of Brooklyn, New York. The collection is divided into three series. The first series contains the papers of descendants of the Bennets and Ryders; the second series contains the papers of the descendants of the Lake, Stillwell and Van Sicklen families; and the third series contains photographs and postcards of the Bennett, Ryder, Vorhis, and Valentine families. Photographs of family members from the Van Cleef and Sillwell families are also included in series three. The documents, the majority of which are wills, deeds and indentures, were created from 1670-1915; the photographs range from the 1870s to 1979.

**Preferred Citation**

Identification of item, date (if known); Bennet and Ryder families collection, ARC.001, Box and Folder number; Brooklyn Historical Society.

## Biographical/Historical note

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### **The Bennet and Ryder Families**

The members of the Bennet family represented in this collection are direct descendents of William Adrianse Bennet, who along with Jacques Bentyne, bought tracts of land from the Canarsees in 1636 and became the first settlers of Gowanus. The heirs represented include William's son Willem Willemse; his grandson John Willemse; his great-great grandson Wynant and his wife Geertie Emans; their son Winant and his wife Jemima Van Duyn; their grandchildren Cornelius W. and Gitty; and Cornelius's daughter-in-law Ellen Bennett and his grandson Edward Bennett.

In 1835, Cornelius W. Bennet moved from Gowanus to Gravesend after purchasing the Wyckoff family home from Andrew and Hendrick Wyckoff. The homestead was passed on to Cornelius' son William and his wife Gertrude Ann Ryder and then on to their son Edward. In 1899, Edward Bennett married Nelly May Ryder, daughter of Charles M. Ryder and Gertrude M. Vorhis. Edward and Nelly's daughter Gertrude Ryder Bennett Williams lived in the homestead until her death in 1982 at the age of 81. Williams was a poet whose work was influenced by the lives of her colonial ancestors. Built in 1766 for the Wyckoff's, the Wyckoff Bennett homestead was granted landmark status in 1976. There are many photographs of Edward, Nelly May, and Gertrude at the Wyckoff Bennett homestead in series three of this collection.

### **The Lakes**

John Lake was among the original English settlers of Gravesend founded in 1643 by Englishwoman Lady Deborah Moody. Gravesend was the only English town in Dutch New Netherland and included the present day neighborhoods of Coney Island, Sheepshead Bay and part of Bensonhurst. John Lake's grandson Daniel and his great-grandson Derick, as well as Derick's nephew Coert and Coert's sons Court and Daniel are all represented in this collection. Also included are the papers of Derrick D. Lake, husband of Sarah Ann Fleming and likely relation to the Gravesend Lakes.

### **The Stillwells**

The Stillwell papers in this collection are those of the likely heirs of Nicholas Stillwell, one of the original settlers of Gravesend. Represented are Captain Nicholas Stillwell, Samuel Stillwell, Jaques I. Stillwell and his son Jaques J. Stillwell and his wife Joanna. Captain Stillwell was one of the governors and trustees of Queens College in New Jersey. Queens College (now Rutgers University) was started in 1766 by the Dutch Reform Church as a school of Theology. Jaques J. Stillwell was assemblyman from the 12th District in Kings County from 1881-82.

### **The Van Sicklens**

Ferdinand Van Sicklen is a likely descendant of Fernandus Van Sicklen, a Dutchman who was one of the original settlers of the English town Gravesend. Ferdinand's papers are represented in this collection.

### **A note on names:**

In this collection, the second "t" in the Bennet name appears sometime in the mid-19th century, Cornelius W. Bennet and previous generations spelled it with one "t", his son William Bennett and subsequent generations spelled it with two. Vanderbilt was originally Van der Bilt, Stillwell may have originally been Stilwel. First names appear with alternate spellings or in familiar forms: Aaron is sometimes spelled Aron, Jaques is sometimes Jacques and John sometimes appears as Jan. Wynant is sometimes Weynant or Winant, and Derrick appears as Derick or Dirck. Gitty, Geertie, Geertje and Charity were forms of Gertrude and Jemima was a familiar form of Jacomyntie.

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## Scope and Contents

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The collection is comprised of materials donated by the Flatbush Historical Society to the Brooklyn Historical Society in 2002-2003. Inclusive dates of the papers are circa 1670-1915, and dates for the photographs and postcards are 1870s-1979. The bulk of the first two series is comprised of legal documents such as wills, indentures, deeds and receipts. The first series contains legal documents and correspondence related to Wynant Bennet of Gowanus and his heirs living in Gowanus, New Utrecht and Gravesend. The second series contains legal documents and correspondence of the heirs of other founding families of Gravesend, primarily the Lakes, the Stillwells and the Van Sicklens. The majority of the Bennet papers belong to Cornelius W. Bennet (1776-1852) and the majority of the Ryder papers belong to Gertrude M. and Charles M. Ryder (circa 1869-1915). There are five documents in Dutch, one of which relates to the Dutch Reformed Church of Flatlands. Most items are original, with some early copies, and many are in fragile condition. Series three primarily contains photographs of Edward, Nelly May, and Gertrude Ryder Bennett. Photographs of the Ryder, Vorhis, Van Cleef, and Valentine families are also included in series three. In addition to family photographs are printed materials regarding various Dutch farm houses in Brooklyn, including photographs of the interior and exterior of the Ryder house, the Wyckoff house, the Flatlands Dutch Reformed Church, and the new Gravesend Dutch Reformed Church.

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## Arrangement note

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The documents arrived in no particular order, the current order was imposed by the processor. This collection is organized into three series. Series 1: The Bennet and Ryder Papers; Series 2: The Lake, Stillwell, Van Sicklen Papers; Series 3: Photographs and Postcards.

## Administrative Information

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### Publication Information

Brooklyn Historical Society February 2009

### Conditions Governing Access

Open to researchers without restriction.

### Conditions Governing Use note

Materials in this collection are in the public domain.

### Immediate Source of Acquisition note

The historical documents were collected by the Flatbush Historical Society during the post World War II era. In the late 1990s the membership of the Flatbush Historical Society declined and the Board determined to disband and turn over its collections to the Brooklyn Historical Society. This was accomplished with the consent of the New York State Education Department which regulates historical societies.

### Processing Information note

Series 1 and Series 2 of the collection were arranged and described by Catey Farley in 2009, under the supervision of Chela Scott Weber. Series 3 was arranged, integrated into the collection and described by Robyn Hjerstad in 2010.

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## Related Materials

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### Related Archival Materials note

Brooklyn Historical Society holds the *Bennett family collection of Civil War correspondence and other material* (call number 2009.012).

Several of the family names that appear in this collection also are found in the *Terhune and Wyckoff families papers* (call number ARC.279), including Bennet, Emmans, Lake, Ryder, and Stillwell.

BHS's library also holds the following items:

Adams, Arthur and Sarah Ann Risley. *A genealogy of the Lake family*. Hartford, CT: Privately printed, 1915. CS71 .L354 1915

Bangs, Charlotte Rebecca Woglom. *Reminiscences of old New Utrecht and Gowanus*. Brooklyn: Brown Eagle Press, 1912. F129 .B7 B26 1912

Several books of poetry by Gertrude Ryder Bennett including some inspired by her life at the Wyckoff Bennett Homestead:

Bennett, Gertrude Ryder. *Ballads of colonial days*. Francestown, NH: Golden Quill Press, 1972. PZ3.B439 B353 1972

Bennett, Gertrude Ryder. *Etched in words*. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1938. PZ3.B439 E83 1938

Bennett, Gertrude Ryder. *The Hessian lieutenant left his name*. Francestown, NH: Golden Quill Press, 1976. PZ3.B439 H47 1976

Bergen, Teunis G. *Genealogy of the Van Brunt family: 1653-1867*. Albany : J.Munsell, 1867. CS71. V36338 1867 c.3.

Vanderbilt, Gertrude Lefferts. *The social history of Flatbush, and manners and customs of the Dutch settlers in Kings County*. New York : D. Appleton & Co., 1882. F129.B7 v36 1882.

Van Rensselaer, Mrs. John King. *The Goede Vrouw of Mana-ha-ta 1609-1760*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1898. F128.4 .V27 1898.

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## Controlled Access Headings

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### Corporate Name(s)

- Protestant Dutch Reformed Church of Flatlands (New York, N.Y.)

### Genre(s)

- Correspondence
- Deeds
- Indentures
- Legal documents
- Photographs
- Postcards
- Receipts (financial records)

- Wills

## Geographic Name(s)

- Brooklyn (New York, N.Y.)
- Brooklyn (New York, N.Y.) |x History
- Coney Island (New York, N.Y.)
- Gowanus (New York, N.Y.)
- Gravesend (New York, N.Y.)
- Kings County (N.Y.)
- New Utrecht (New York, N.Y.)

## Personal Name(s)

- Bennet, Cornelius W., ca. 1776-ca. 1852
- Bennet, Gitty, b. ca. 1774
- Bennet, Willem Willemse, ca. 1639-ca. 1694
- Bennet, Willem
- Bennet, Winant, 1740-1816
- Bennett, Edward, b. ca. 1863
- Bennett, Ellen, 1818-1894
- Bennett, Elley May Ryder
- Bennett, Gertrude Ryder
- Brown, Abraham, b. ca. 1802
- Lake, Coert, 1760-1846
- Lake, Court D., 1788-1874
- Lake, Daniel, 1696-1776
- Lake, Daniel, 1783-1827
- Lake, Derrick, 1765-1832
- Ryder, Charles M., 1844-1917
- Ryder, Gertrude M., 1844-1916
- Stillwell, Jaques, fl. 1805
- Stillwell, Nicholas, 1709-1781
- Vanderbilt, Aaron
- Williams, Gertrude Ryder Bennett

## Subject(s)

- Genealogy

## Series 1: Bennet and Ryder Papers

## Collection Inventory

### Series 1: Bennet and Ryder Papers 1670-circa 1980, 1.15 Linear feet

#### Scope and Contents

The earliest of the Bennet papers are those of Willem Willemse Bennet and his son Jan Willemse Bennet. The largest portions of the Bennet Ryder papers are those of Cornelius W. Bennet and Charles M. and Gertrude M. Ryder. The papers contain a group of 65 deeds, quit-claims and titles for properties held by the Bennett Ryder families dating from 1869 to 1915, including the Charles M. Ryder House at what is now 32 Village Road North. Aside from these deeds the papers include wills, indentures, tax receipts, and other legal documents.

#### Arrangement note

Arranged by family and subdivided by family member, the contents of each folder are arranged chronologically from earliest to latest. The papers of Geertje Emans, wife of Wynant Bennet, and Jemima Van Duyn, wife of Winant Bennet, are filed with their husband's. Material with a designation of Box 3 is stored in an oversize flat box.

	Dates	Box	Folder
Addresses on Intemperance (Author Unknown).	1839-1841	1	S1:1
Cornelius W. Bennet-Legal Documents.	1830-1845	1	S1:2
Cornelius W. Bennet- Map of Bennet Farm.	1834	3	S1:3
Cornelius W. Bennet- Legal Documents and Correspondence.	1834-1850	3	S1:4

## Series 1: Bennet and Ryder Papers

Cornelius W. Bennet- Legal Documents.	1846-1852	1	S1:5
Ellen Hendrickson Bennett.	Undated	1	S1:6
Gitty Bennet- Legal Documents.	1823-1839	3	S1:7
Gitty Bennet- Legal Document.	1835	1	S1:8
James C. Bennet- Manuscript of Autobiography, Receipt.	circa 1845	1	S1:9
John Bennet- Legal Documents.	1701-1730	3	S1:10
Miscellaneous Bennet- Notes, Press Release, Copy of <i>The Brooklyn Prospect</i> .	1859- circa 1980	1	S1:11
Willem Willemse Bennet- Legal Documents, Early Copies, in Dutch.	1670-1686	3	S1:12
William Bennett- Receipt, Newspaper Clipping.	circa 1844-1891	1	S1:13
William Bennett- Map of Property.	1897	1	S1:14
Winant Bennet (1740-1816)- Legal Documents.	1780-1798	3	S1:15
Winant Bennet (1740-1816)- Legal Documents.	1790-1828	1	S1:16
Wynant Bennet (circa 1716-circa 1768)- Legal Documents.	1738-1780	3	S1:17
Wynant Bennet (circa 1716-circa 1768)- Legal Documents.	1748-1781	1	S1:18

**Series 2: Lake, Stillwell, Van Sicklen Papers**

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Charles M. and Gertrude M. Ryder- Deeds-Horn Transaction.	1703-1905	1	S1:19
Charles M. And Gertrude M. Ryder- Deeds (8 folders).	1869-1875	1	S1:20-27
John S. Ryder- Legal Document	1845	3	S1:32
Charles M. And Gertrude M. Ryder- Deeds (2 folders).	1909	2	S1:28-29
Gertrude M. Ryder- Diaries, Correspondence, Photograph, Typed Copy of Diary, Typed Note, Clipping.	1865-1884	2	S1:30
John S. Ryder- Marriage Certificate, Receipt.	1836-1866	2	S1:31

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**Series 2: Lake, Stillwell, Van Sicklen Papers 1701-1889, 1.1 Linear feet****Arrangement note**

This series is arranged by family and subdivided by family member, the contents of each folder are arranged chronologically from earliest to latest.

**Scope and Contents**

The majority of the documents in this series are wills, deeds, quit claims, tax receipts, and receipts for goods and services belonging to the Lake, Stillwell and Van Sicklen families. Also included in this series, are the papers of various related families living in Coney Island, Gowanus, Gravesend, and New Utrecht as well as some papers regarding municipal matters. Notable documents in this series include:

Four legal documents in Dutch relating to Willem Willemsen Bennet, including two signed by Dirck Storm, 1670-1686.

## Series 2: Lake, Stillwell, Van Sicklen Papers

A letter in Dutch to the New York Church Council from J. Ritzema regarding the change from Coetus to Classis in the Dutch Reformed Church, dated Sept. 19, 1754.

An indenture between James B. Clarke and Abraham Brown dated October 27, 1812. Brown, a ten-year-old African-American boy "belonging to the Town of Brooklyn in the County of Kings" was contracted as apprentice to James B. Clarke for a period of 10 years and 8 months. Among other details, the document includes a statement requiring Clarke to teach Brown to read and write.

	Dates	Box	Folder
William Barber and Catherine A. Gahagan- Legal Documents.	1886-1887	2	S2:1
Brooklyn- Early Copy of Town Meeting Minutes.	1754	2	S2:2
Abraham Brown and James L. Clarke- Legal Documents.	1812	2	S2:3
Coney Island- Marginal Railroad Company Land Acquisition.	circa 1866-1879	2	S2:4
Cortelyou Family- Typed Copy of Legal Document.	circa 1830	2	S2:5
John Dover- Opinion.	1823	3	S2:6
Dutch Reform Church- Letter from J. Ritzema in Dutch.	1754	3	S2:7
John Emmens- Legal Document.	1854	3	S2:8
Gravesend- Audit Documents, Constitution, By Laws Pamphlet.	1733-1885	2	S2:9
Samuel and Stephen Hubbard- Map of Property.	1800	3	S2:10
Stephen Hubbard- Legal Document.	1818	3	S2:11

## Series 2: Lake, Stillwell, Van Sicklen Papers

David Hubbell- Early Copy of Correspondence.	1829-1830	2	S2:12
Coert Lake- Oath of Allegiance, Receipt.	1776-1788	2	S2:13
Court D. Lake- Receipt.	1836	2	S2:14
Daniel Lake (1696-1776)- Legal Documents and Early Copy.	1734	2	S2:15
Daniel Lake (1783-1827)- Legal Documents.	1816-1817	2	S2:16
Derick Lake (circa 1720- circa 1800)- Legal Documents.	1770-1795	2	S2:17
Derick Lake (circa 1720- circa 1800)- Legal Documents	1770-1795	3	S2:18
Derick Lake (1783-1827)- Legal Documents.	1789-1800	3	S2:19
Derrick D. Lake (1765-1832)- Legal Documents, Receipt.	1800-1827	3	S2:20
Derrick D. Lake (1765-1832)- Legal Documents, Receipt.	1801-1832	2	S2:21
Derrick D. Lake (1765-1832)- Legal Documents.	1828-1832	3	S2:22
Puerto Rico- Partial Legal Document.	1847	2	S2:23
Aaron S. Robbins- Abstract of Title.	1876	2	S2:24
George Romsen- Legal Document.	1701	2	S2:25
Jaques Stillwell- Legal Document.	1805	3	S2:26
Jaques I. Stillwell (1801-circa 1863)- Deeds.	1834-1845	3	S2:27
Jaques I. Stillwell (1801-circa 1863)- Legal Documents, Receipts, Early Copy.	1842-1863	2	S2:28

## Series 2: Lake, Stillwell, Van Sicklen Papers

Jaques J. Stillwell (1827-circa 1863)- Legal Documents, Receipts, Railroad Passes.	1849-1881	2	S2:29
Jaques J. Stillwell (1827-1844)- Deed.	1865	3	S2:30
Joanna Stillwell- Legal Documents.	1881-1886	2	S2:31
Joanna Stillwell- Map of Property.	1889	3	S2:32
John W. Stillwell- Will, Receipt.	Undated	2	S2:33
Miscellaneous Stillwell- Receipts, Anniversary Announcement.	1859-1873	2	S2:35
Nicholas Stillwell- Partial Will, Review of Title.	Undated	2	S2:36
Samuel Stillwell- Legal Documents.	1844	3	S2:37
William H. and Caroline Taylor- Partial Deed.	1873	2	S2:38
Aaron Vanderbilt- Legal Document, Early Copy of Will, Maps of Property.	1824-1846	2	S2:39
Aaron Vanderbilt- Legal Document.	1810	3	S2:40
Auris Van der Bilt- Legal Document.	1799	3	S2:41
Peter Vanderbilt- Legal Document.	1768	3	S2:42
Henry Van Dyck- Receipt.	1845	2	S2:43
Ferdinand Van Sicklen- Receipts.	1840-1849	2	S2:44
Ferdinand Van Sicklen- Account of Estate Sale.	1849	3	S2:45

**Series 3: Photographs and Postcards**

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Miscellaneous Voorhees- Receipts, Early Copy of Legal Document.	1755-1781	2	S2:46
Jno. Wyckoff- Receipt.	Undated	2	S2:47

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**Series 3: Photographs and Postcards 1870s-2006, 0.25 Linear feet****Arrangement note**

This series is arranged in 8 folders: the Bennett Family (2 folders), Dutch Farmhouses-printed materials, Flatlands Dutch Reformed Church and new Gravesend Dutch Reformed Church, the Ryder Family, the Valentine Family, the Voorhis Family, and Miscellaneous Photographs and Postcards. The miscellaneous photographs and postcards folder contains photographs of Jaques Van Brunt Stillwell, "Mr. Kowenhohen," William, Ida, and Joe Van Cleef; as well as various postcards and an unidentified school photograph. The photographs in each folder are arranged by size for preservation purposes; all other material is arranged chronologically. Most of the folders include undated material for which the archivist applied circa dates for the folder level date ranges.

**Scope and Contents**

This series contains photographs of the Bennett, Ryder, Vorhis, and Valentine families; portraits of Jaques Van Brunt Stillwell, William, Ida, and Joe Van Cleef, and Howard Pesk are also included herein. The majority of the family photographs are images of Edward Bennett, his wife Nelly May Ryder Bennett, and their daughter Gertrude Ryder Bennett Williams between 1935-1979. Many of the photographs of the Bennetts were taken at their home, the Bennett-Wyckoff homestead in Brooklyn. In addition to many images of Edward with students from his Sunday school class are portraits of Edward on his 91st birthday and portraits of Nelly May and Gertrude.

This series also contains photographs of Uriah, Janey, and Charles M. Ryder (1874), as well as photographs of the interior of the Ryder home (1936).

## Series 3: Photographs and Postcards

In addition to family photographs are printed materials regarding various Dutch farm houses in Brooklyn with postcards of the Wyckoff house as well as photographs of the Flatlands Dutch Reformed Church, and the new Gravesend Dutch Reformed Church from the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

	Dates	Box	Folder
Bennett Family Photographs (2 folders)	1904-1979	4	S3:1-2
Dutch Farm Houses-Printed Materials	1984-2006	4	S3:3
Flatlands Dutch Reformed Church, New Gravesend Dutch Reformed Church	circa 1904	4	S3:4
Ryder Family Photographs	1874, 1936	4	S3:5
Valentine Family Photographs	Late 1800s	4	S3:6
Voorhis Family Photographs	1890s	4	S3:7
Miscellaneous Photographs and Postcards	circa 1890-1920	4	S3:8