

1 record carton  
(1 cubic foot)  
ArMs 2005.021  
Location: 4C-7.3.D

Bedell and Conklin Family Collection  
1839-1917

Brooklyn Historical Society  
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## Introduction

This collection contains financial records and some personal correspondence generated by Ebenezer Conklin and his descendants. The bulk of the records (seven folders) were generated by Ebenezer Conklin, and mostly concern household expenses, repairs and improvements made on Conklin's several properties. The records of Nathaniel Augustus Conklin and Sarah Bedell, two of Ebenezer's children, continue the history of Ebenezer's properties. The small series of correspondence contains Civil War letters, and a copy of the General Orders of the 19<sup>th</sup> Army Corps Headquarters at Camp Russell.

The collection was donated to the Brooklyn Historical Society in 2005 by the Wahlberg family, descendants of the Conklins and Bedells. There are no access restrictions on this collection.

## Historical Note

Ebenezer Conklin and his wife Sarah Aletta Clowes had five children, four of whom survived to adulthood. Sarah, the eldest, and Nathaniel Augustus, the third child, are represented in this collection. Sarah married George Bedell, the son of William Bedell<sup>1</sup>. Sarah and George Bedell had two children, one of whom may be Elbert Bedell<sup>2</sup>. William Bedell appears to have been Conklin's business partner for a time—there are several mentions in the records of a 'Bedell and Conklin Company'—but the nature of this business is unclear. William Bedell was the chief proprietor of a straw and feed company; there are several receipts from his store included in the collection. While Ebenezer Conklin is represented in this collection primarily as a landlord and property owner, he was also an employee or associate of the Peter Cooper glue factory and millworks. Nathaniel Augustus Conklin, known as 'Gus', served in the Civil War and later came to reside at 175 Ainslie Street. The two letters to his father included in this collection make some mention of his own business affairs. Harriet Louisa Conklin, the second of the Conklin children, is represented in this collection only by the presence of her school bills, and possibly by a letter from Gus addressed to a "sister".

As most houses and buildings were not numbered until the advent of the modern postal service in the United States, the earlier property and tax records in this collection do not have numeric street addresses but are instead identified by lot numbers and geographic descriptions. Later records in the collection generally identify the properties by number.

## Scope and Content

The collection contains financial records, family correspondence, and a small collection of ephemera. The financial records of Ebenezer Conklin make up the greatest part of the collection and pertain to all aspects of Conklin's financial life. With the exception of the Reformed Protestant Church ledgers, the financial records of his descendants and relatives generally concern only building repairs and tax records, those records which pertain to their various properties. Between the early 1860s and 1917, Conklin and his descendants maintained several properties on Orient Avenue, Kingsland Avenue, Metropolitan Avenue, and Maspeth Avenue. Nathaniel Augustus came to live at 175 Ainslie Street. The collection is arranged in four series: I. Financial Records, 1839-1917 and undated II. Correspondence, 1863-1901 and undated III. Printed Ephemera and Clippings, 1878-1913 and undated IV. Account Books of the Reformed Protestant Dutch Church of Bushwick, 1876-1884.

Series 1: Financial Records, 1839-1917 and undated

The first seven folders in this series contain Ebenezer Conklin's records; the subsequent folders contain the financial records of his children who continued to maintain and reside at many of Conklin's properties, in

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<sup>1</sup> 173rd New York State Volunteer Infantry: Letters of Nathaniel Augustus Conklin. <http://173rdnysvi.org/letters.htm>. accessed 24 July 2007.

<sup>2</sup> Brooklyn Genealogy Information Pages. <http://www.bklyn-genealogy-info.com/> accessed 24 July 2007.

addition to acquiring several new lots. Included in Ebenezer Conklin's records are school bills, tax receipts, sales receipts, estimates from contractors, cancelled checks, and mortgages. The records of Conklin's descendants are primarily tax returns and sales receipts. The tax records of previous owner of the Ainslie Street property, Jonas Dale, are also included in this collection, along with the Nathaniel Augustus Conklin records. A map, though undated and badly damaged, shows the Bedell family lots.

**Series 2: Correspondence, 1863-1901 and undated**

The small series of correspondence includes several items of correspondence between Augustus and the widow of a man who served in his regiment during the Civil War, one of Augustus' Civil War letters, a copy of the General Orders of the 19<sup>th</sup> Army Corps Headquarters at Camp Russell, Virginia, a few letters from Ebenezer Conklin to a Boston business associate S. H. Robinson, two letters from Augustus Conklin to Ebenezer Conklin, a letter from Ebenezer Conklin to the Brooklyn Board of Aldermen protesting a proposed sewer on Orient Avenue.

**Series 3: Printed Ephemera and Clippings, 1878-1913 and undated**

This series includes cards and other promotional materials from Brooklyn businesses, as well as Elbert Bedell's calling card. It also contains two clippings: one from the classifieds of the June 8, 1913 Boston Sunday Globe, the other from a paper dated 1899 of a short Civil War camp anecdote.

**Series 4: Account Books of the Reformed Protestant Dutch Church of Bushwick, 1876-1884**

These two books, a cash accounts book and a pew ledger, both span the years 1876-1884. William Bedell and his son George Bedell are listed as parishioners.

**Related Material**

ArMs 1977.025: Landon Family Papers [The Landon Family is related to the Bedell/Conklin family]

173rd New York State Volunteer Infantry: Letters of Nathaniel Augustus Conklin.

<http://173rdnysvi.org/letters.htm>. Accessed 24 July 2007.

**Container List**

**Series 1, Financial Records, and undated**

<u>Box</u>	<u>Folder</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Dates</u>
1	1	Financial Records of Ebenezer Conklin	1839-1849
	2	Financial Records of Ebenezer Conklin	1850-1859
	3	Financial Records of Ebenezer Conklin	1860-1869
	4	Financial Records of Ebenezer Conklin	1870-1875
	5	Financial Records of Ebenezer Conklin	1876-1879
	6	Financial Records of Ebenezer Conklin	1880-1885
	7	Financial Records of Ebenezer Conklin	1886-1894
	8	Financial Records of Nathaniel Augustus Conklin	1863-1888
	9	Financial Records of George and Sarah Bedell	1865-1906
	10	Financial Records of Sarah Bedell	1894-1908
	11	Financial Records of Elbert Bedell	1891-1917

12	Financial Records: Parties Unknown	1888-1903
13	Map of Bedell Family Lots	undated

**Series 2: Bedell-Conklin Personal Correspondence, 1863-1901 and undated**

1	1	Correspondence	1863-1901
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**Series 3: Printed Ephemera and Clippings, 1878-1913 and undated**

1	1	Ephemera and Clippings	1878-1913
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**Series 4: Account Books of the Reformed Protestant Dutch Church of Bushwick, 1876-1884**

1	1	Cash accounts book	1876-1884
	2	Pew ledger	1876-1884

**Access Points**

Names

Bedell Family  
 Conklin Family  
 Conklin, Ebenezer  
 Conklin, Nathaniel Augustus  
 Bedell, Elbert  
 Bedell, George  
 Bedell, Sarah

Topics

Church records and registers—Brooklyn (New York, N.Y.)  
 Land titles—Brooklyn (New York, N.Y.)  
 Real property—Brooklyn (New York, N.Y.)  
 Retail trade—Brooklyn (New York, N.Y.)  
 United States—History—Civil War, 1861-1865

Geographic Terms

Bushwick (New York, N.Y.)  
 Brooklyn (New York, N.Y.)—Social life and customs  
 Camp Russell A. Alger (Va.)  
 Williamsburg (New York, N.Y.)

Forms and Genres

Bills of sale  
 Clippings  
 Correspondence  
 Ledgers (account books)  
 Printed ephemera  
 Receipts (financial records)  
 Tax records