

William Richardson Papers (1853-1896)
ArMs 1977.169

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MANUSCRIPT SECTION
LONG ISLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Register 4

William Richardson Paper (1853-1896)

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14 Folder

Source and date: Ruth R. Richardson, 1953

The William Richardson Papers document the personal and business affairs of this Brooklyn businessman. Richardson (1822-1893) owned the Atlantic Avenue Railroad Company, was an Alderman for the Twenty-Second Ward, and was active in many civic and social organizations in Brooklyn.

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BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

William Richardson (1822-1893) was a prominent post-Civil War resident of Brooklyn. Born in England in 1822, he emigrated to the United States with his parents in 1834 and settled in Ohio. At the age of 18, Richardson moved to Albany, New York, where he worked as a hotel clerk, umbrella maker, and paper hanger. He also became active in the new Republican Party, serving as a member of that party's first state committee. From 1857-1860 he was appointed Clerk to the State Assembly. In 1844 Richardson married Mary Freeman.

After serving as Army paymaster during the Civil War, Richardson moved to New York City in 1864 to become Superintendent of the Dry Dock, East Broadway and Battery Railroad Company. Shortly thereafter he was elected President of the company. In 1867 Richardson moved to Brooklyn when the opportunity arose to lease the Atlantic Avenue, East New York and Greenwood Railroad from the Brooklyn Central and Jamaica Railroad. Originally, Richardson obtained a 40 year lease on the line, but in 1872 his holdings were jeopardized when the Brooklyn Central and Jamaica defaulted on its mortgage. However, Richardson was able to secure complete ownership of his line, and he reorganized it as the Atlantic Avenue Railroad Company. He continued to operate the company for two decades, earning a reputation as a hard-working and foresighted businessman. In 1877 Richardson leased his rights to the Atlantic Avenue surface route to the Long Island Railroad. At this time the Long Island Railroad began using steam engines on the route, thus involving Richardson in the controversy over their use within the Brooklyn city limits. Finally, in 1892 Richardson sold the company to the Brooklyn Traction Company.

As a Brooklyn resident, Richardson remained active in Republican Party activities. Elected to serve two terms as Alderman for Brooklyn's 22nd Ward from 1870-1874, Richardson was active on issues involving water supply, illuminating gas and local improvements for his Ward. As a politician, Richardson was regarded as a lieutenant of Republican boss Benjamin Tracy who was an officer of the Atlantic Avenue Railroad.

Richardson also served on the Kings County Board of Supervisors. In 1874 as the result of the resignation of the chief medical officers of the Kings County Lunatic Asylum, the Board of Supervisors appointed a Committee of Investigation Relative to the County Institutions. Richardson chaired this committee's inquiries into the conditions of the agencies run by the County Commissioners of Charities. The committee's printed report, issued in December 1874, recommended a few reforms of operating procedures.

Upon his death the Brooklyn Daily Eagle eulogized Richardson for his faith in and dedication to Brooklyn's railroads, his honesty, and his active involvement in civic causes.

COLLECTION 1977.169

f. 1 CORRESPONDENCE

Letters sent by William Richardson:

Henry C. Murphy, ALS, 1872.

Military Committee of the Board of Supervisors, ALS, 1873.

Brooklyn Baptist Social Union membership, printed, 1887.

Letters received by WR:

William H. Butler, ALS, 1881.

Daniel Northup (Secretary, Department of City Works), ALS, 1881.

Garfield Memorial Home for Consumptives, printed, 1882.

Brooklyn Memorial Service in Honor of Gen. John A. Logan, 2 items, TL, 1887.

Beecher Statue Fund, printed, 1887.

James W. Birkett (Kings County Republican Campaign Committee), TL, 1888.

George A. Price (Post #327, CAR), printed, 1891.

Charles Heatley, ALS, 1892.

Howard N. Smith (Urban League Club), ALS 1892.

National Prohibition Park Company, printed, 1893.

New York State Woman Suffrage Association, printed, ca. 1894.

Letters received by Mrs. Richardson:

Rev. J. Willett (Superintendent of the Inebriates Home for Kings County), ALS, 1874.

Letters received by Charles Richardson:

Carrie and Wooddie Beyea, ALS, 1868.

Ella Hamilton, ALS, 1868.

f. 2 FAMILY ITEMS

Louise Richardson, report cards, 20 items, 1865-69.

Ruth Richardson, P.S. 39 Reward of Merit, 1888.

Commencement programs:

University of the City of New York, 1875.

College of Physicians and Surgeons, 1876 & 1877.

Miss Whitcomb's Seminary, 1880.

Boys' High School, 1895 & 1889.

Girls' High School, 1896.

Programs for parties given by the Richardson's, 3 items, 1866—1870.

Long Island Historical Society, certificate, 1871.

Soldiers Home of New York, certificate, 1876.

Household bills, 2 items, 1858 & 1892.

f. 3 PROGRAMS, INVITATIONS & TICKETS

- 43 items, 1871—1895.
- f. 4 **POLITICS**
WR, 2 election leaflets for Alderman campaign, 1972.
Leaflet for Republican Party meeting, 1868.
Asa B. Richardson, election leaflet (WR is one of the signers), 1871.
The Brooklyn Journal, v.1, #1, 1871 (A Kings County Republican campaign paper).
3 newsclippings, 1871—74.
- f. 5 **BROOKLYN CITY COUNCIL**
Petition of residents of Fifth Avenue to the Board of Water Commissioners re: street paving, 1869.
Petition of 8th Street property owners to WR re: flagging of sidewalks, 1871.
Petition of 12th Street residents to the City Council re: sidewalks, 1872.
F.S. Massey (President, Board of Commissioners of the Fire Department), copy of ALS to City Council re: fire engine at 8th Precinct, 1872.
Petition of 4th Street property owners re: street paving, 1872.
Petition of 11th Street residents to Board of Aldermen re: vacant lots, 1872.
Report of Department of City Works to City Council re: Water Department budget, 1872.
William DeWitt (Corporation Counsel), ALS to City Council re: water rates, 1873.
Robert van Bunn, AIS to Col. Julius Adams re: grading of Second Avenue, 1873.
C.H. Stoddard, ALS to WR re: opening of 12th Street, 1873.
City Clerk's Office, 3 memos re: Board of Aldermen's resolutions on illuminating gas supply, 1873.
Board of Health report to the City council re: stagnant ponds, 1874.
City Clerk's Office memo to WR re: stagnant ponds, 1874.
Street lamp lighting timetable, 1874.
Newsclipping re: WR, 1872.
Memo re: legality of contracts for local improvements (writer unknown), ca. 1872.
City Council minutes, printed, 3 items, 1869 & 1875..
- f. 6 **COMMITTEE OF INVESTIGATION ... RELATIVE TO THE COUNTY INSTITUTIONS**
Kings County Board of Supervisors, minutes, printed, 3 items, 1874.
Children's Aid Society, report re: children removed from Kings County institutions to rural homes, Ms., 1874.
Kings County Lunatic Asylum, copy of affidavits by the staff, Ms., 1874.
Local Visiting Committee of the State Charities Aid Association for the Kings County Institutions, Constitution and By-Laws, printed, 1874.
Marcus Bland, bill for his board in the Kings County Lunatic Asylum, 1874.

- f. 7 Dr. W. M. SMITH
2 petitions to Gov. Grover Cleveland urging that Smith be retained as the health officer for the Port of New York, 1884.
- f. 8 MISCELLANEOUS
Newsclipping of WR speech at a banquet honoring the Fenians, 1871.
New York Daily Tribune, July 10, 1869, a list of taxable incomes for individuals in the New York City area.
Deed, John and Mary King to George and Mary Chadwick, 1865.
John Moffat, memo re: assessment of Sixth Avenue property, Ms., n.d.
New York Senate, Act re: filling in of sunken lots in Brooklyn, signed by Wm. B. Wooden, President Pro-Tern of the Senate, Ms., 1872.
Draft of an act to improve Furman Street, n.d.
Draft of an act to open Eleventh Avenue, n.d.
Flatbush schoolmaster's contract for 1682, copy, n.d.
Newsclipping.
"Handkerchief Flirtation", Ms., 2 pages, n.d.
Embroidery sample.
Bookmark.
- f. 9 RAILROADS 1853
Brooklyn ordinance re: Long Island Railroad tunnel under Atlantic Avenue, printed.
- f. 10 RAILROADS 1865—1869
2 maps of Dry Dock, East Broadway and Battery Railroad properties.
Henry L. Pierson, Jr., subpoena for Vail et. al. versus Brooklyn Central and Jamaica Railroad et. al., 1865.
Brooklyn and Jamaica Railroad, articles of association, copy, 1865.
Copy of indenture between Brooklyn Central and Jamaica Railroad and the City of Brooklyn re: Atlantic Avenue property, 1867.
Hudson Avenue Railroad, consent of property owners for the 9th Avenue Railroad, 1897.
Atlantic Avenue, East New York and Greenwood Railroad, license from the City of Brooklyn to operate a surface route, 1868.
Atlantic Avenue, East New York and Greenwood Railroad, extension of the line from Atlantic Avenue to Prospect Park, 1 copy of New York Senate act, 2 unsigned petitions, 2 maps, 3 letters of consent from property owners, 1868.
"City Railroad Fare," pamphlet by WR on the five cent fare, printed, 12 pages, 1869.
Newsclipping of WR letter in Brooklyn Daily Union re: railroad fare, 1869.
- f. 11 RAILROADS 1870—1879

- Petition of residents of the Village of East New York to WR urging an extension of railroad services to their area, 1872.
- Seventh Avenue Line, leaflet, ca. 1873.
- Robert Greuzbaur to Gen. H.W. Slocum, ALS, 1873 with 4 enclosures re: Greuzbaur's plans for steam streetcars.
- Assembly Act re: assessment of Atlantic Avenue property owners, printed 1875.
- Use of steam engines on Atlantic Avenue, 5 items including a copy of the Brooklyn city ordinance, a leaflet and 2 petitions from property owners, 1876—77.
- Transcript of an unidentified court hearing (WR spoke for the defendants), Ms., 3 pages on the back of LIRR leaflets, ca. 1877.
- U.S. Circuit Court, opinion in Miller vs. LIRR, printed, 6 pages, ca. 1877.
- Union Line, plan for operation written by Henry M. Lee, 1878..
- f.12 RAILROADS 1880—1889
- Veto message of Brooklyn Mayor James Howell of an act to reduce the speed of cars on the Atlantic Avenue Line, printed, 1881.
- City Record (New York City), 1882, re: street cars, 2 items.
- Agreement (copy), Thomas and Mary Nesbit granting WR the use of patents for a cable railroad, 1884.
- Assessment of Atlantic Avenue property owners, 2 items, typed copy of N.Y. State act and a leaflet with statements by WR and E.B. Litchfield, 1885.
- Brooklyn City Council minutes re: cable railroad, printed, 1885.
- Transcript of a meeting of the Atlantic Avenue Railroad employees, has speeches of WR, Patrick D. Murphy, James P. Graham, Andrew D. Best, and Patrick Conless, 15 pages typed copy, 1886.
- W.W. Backies (?) to WR, ALS re: development of Bergen Island, 1887.
- Newsclipping (copy) re: WR, 1888.
- f.13 RAILROADS 1890—1895
- Mutual Benefit Society for the Atlantic Avenue Railroad employees, postcard, 1890.
- Newsclipping (copy) re: trolleys, 1891.
- Streetcar electification, typed letter from various railroads to the Brooklyn City Council and a draft of a resolution re: the Atlantic Avenue Railroad, 1891-92.
- Newsclipping re: streetcars, 1891.
- Kings County Electric Railway Company, certificate of association, typed copy, 1892.
- Brooklyn Traction Company, prospectus, typed, 1892.
- Atlantic Avenue Railroad, rules and regulations, printed, 1 volume, 1893.
- Newsclipping (copy) re: Brooklyn street cars, 1895.
- f. 14 RAILROADS - UNDATED

Agreement (fragment) to run a street car from Fulton Ferry to Jamaica Queens.
New York State act (a draft) re: Brooklyn Elevated Railroad.
Drawing for a double track elevated railroad on Atlantic Avenue.
f.15 RAILROAD - EPHEMERA
Timetables, bond coupons, passes, leaflets — 30 items.

Items removed to the Ephemera Collections:

“The Style”, published by Henry Bristow, 294 Fulton Street, Brooklyn, 3 issues, ads for sewing machines and dress patterns.

Dr. Jaeger’s Sanitary Woolen System Co., 189_, catalog.

Abraham and Straus, fashion catalogs, 1897, 1904—05, 1905, 3 issues.

Frederick Loeser & Co., “Katie Lee and Willie Grey,” advertising brochure,
n.d., 8 pages. also “Loeser’s Fashion Light,” V. 5 (1876), advertising leaflet.

Brooklyn Improvement Company, advertising leaflet, 1892, 1 page.

S.M. & F.J. Griswold, advertising leaflet, 1888, 2 pages.

Geo. G. Rockwood, “Rockwoods Infantaneous Process” (sic), advertising brochure of a
N.Y.C. photographer, n.d., 24 pages.

Republican Party, campaign song books, 2 items, 1876 & 1888.

United States, Headquarters of the Army, General Orders;
#13 July 31, 1861, re: Mount Vernon
#15 August 17, 1861, re: organization of the Department of the Potomac
#19 November 1, 1861, re: Gen. McClellan assumes command

United States, Treasury Dept., “Instructions for Preparing Claims for Soldiers’ Pay,” n.d.,
4 pages.

McLoughlin Bros. (N.Y.C.), children’s books: “Disorderly Girl” & “Harry Heedless”.
“Tom Warfield’s Gospel Raft”, Ornum & Co’s Semi-Monthly Magazine of
Songs, N.Y.C., n.d., 70 pages.

Long Island Historical Society, leaflet, 1871, 4 pages.

“The Course of Study Adopted by the Girl’s High School of the City of Brooklyn,” 1890,
6 pages.

“Over Here,” V.2 #2 (1920), Woman’s American Baptist Home Mission Society.

Brooklyn Bureau of Charities, Woodyard, advertising leaflet & postcard, n.d.

New England Society in Brooklyn, diagram of seating arrangement, 1889.

“Catalogue of Elegant Furniture to be Sold at Auction ... Residence of Gen. James B. Craig,” William Cole, auctioneer, 1878. Has some manuscript notations.

“Salting of Streets After Snow-Storms,” by A.B. Whitney, reprint of a paper read before the National Eclectic Medical Association, 1885, 7 pages.

Brooklyn Daily Eagle, Monday April 4, 1870.

Brooklyn Daily Eagle, Friday May 25, 1883 (opening of the Brooklyn Bridge).