

Guide to the Nehemiah Denton papers 1977.171

**Finding aid prepared by Anne M. Gordon, with
additional description by Rachel M. Oleaga.**

**Developed in part with grant funds from the U.S. Department of Education
Underground Railroad Educational and Cultural (URR) Program.**

This finding aid was produced using the Archivists' Toolkit

September 02, 2011

Describing Archives: A Content Standard

Brooklyn Historical Society
March 28, 1980
128 Pierrepont Street
Brooklyn, NY, 11201
718-222-4111
library@brooklynhistory.org

Table of Contents

<u>Summary Information</u>	3
<u>Biographical notes</u>	4
<u>Scope and Contents</u>	4
<u>Arrangement note</u>	5
<u>Administrative Information</u>	5
<u>Related Materials</u>	6
<u>Controlled Access Headings</u>	6
<u>Collection Inventory</u>	9

Summary Information

Repository	Brooklyn Historical Society
Creator	Denton, Nehemiah, 1773-1844
Title	Nehemiah Denton papers
Date [bulk]	Bulk, 1830-1844
Date [inclusive]	1785-1844, bulk 1830-1844
Extent	0.5 Linear feet in 1 manuscript box and 1 oversize flat box.
Language	English
Language of Materials	Materials in English.
Abstract	The Nehemiah Denton papers relate to the personal and business involvements of Nehemiah Denton as a miller and merchant of Gowanus, New York. They include legal papers, deeds, receipts, account books and bills of sale.

Preferred Citation

Identification of item, date (if known); Nehemiah Denton papers, 1977.171, Box and Folder number; Brooklyn Historical Society.

Biographical notes

Nehemiah Denton (1773-1844) was born in Jamaica, N.Y., the third son of Thomas Denton and his wife, Mary Skidmore. His family descended from Rev. Richard Denton who came to Hempstead, L.I. in 1650. He was related to Daniel Denton, one of the first settlers of Jamaica, whose *Brief Description of New York, Formerly New Amsterdam* (1670) is one of the earliest accounts published.

Denton married Elizabeth Carpenter in 1797; they had two daughters. Elizabeth and both daughters were dead by 1837 and Denton married Janet Hogarth in 1839.

Although members of his family were among the founding members of the Presbyterian Church in this country, Denton attended the Dutch Reformed church in Brooklyn. He was appointed Elder in 1824 and served for many years. Denton's name appears in the Brooklyn City Directories in the 1820s and 1830s as an assessor for the Town of Brooklyn and as a commissioner of highways. In 1824, he became a director of the first bank in Brooklyn, the Long Island Bank, and served in that capacity for many years.

In addition to his business as a miller in Gowanus, Denton was a merchant in New York. He and his partner, Benjamin Smith, owned Denton and Smith at 25 Coenties Slip. He also owned land in downtown Brooklyn on which he built houses for speculation.

Denton died in 1844. He left as his heir his grandson, Nehemiah Denton Wilkins. He was buried in the family plot at the Prospect Cemetery in Jamaica.

Scope and Contents

The Nehemiah Denton papers consist of more than 300 items in manuscript form relating to the personal and business concerns of Denton. The time period covered is from 1785 to 1844, with a major portion of the collection dating from late 1830 to 1844. The bulk of the material in the collection is in the form of bills, receipts and account books. They are significant in their documentation of the diverse business affairs of Denton.

Items of special interest in this collection include a license to use the patented milling machinery designed by Oliver Evans, with a diagram of the machine on the back. A bill of sale dated 1808 shows the purchase of a sixteen year old African-American boy for \$80. His property records include a deed for land in Flatbush purchased by Leffert Lefferts, a lease for property in the Village of Brooklyn, as well as an agreement made to sell part of his land in the City of Brooklyn to H. Shephard Moat and James E. Underhill. Among the account books is one detailing the names and amounts paid by pew renters of the Dutch Reformed Church in Brooklyn from 1819 to 1826. Other account books include information on various purchases needed to run his milling business.

Three items refer to Denton's brother, Samuel, who died in 1799. Three others concern William Skidmore of Greenwich, a cousin.

Arrangement note

This collection was given to the Long Island Historical Society in 1953. Its original arrangement was re-ordered when it was received; therefore, an artificial arrangement has been used, sorting by type, then placing in date order.

Administrative Information

Publication Information

Brooklyn Historical Society March 28, 1980

Conditions Governing Access

Open to researchers without restriction.

Conditions Governing Use

Material in this collection is in the public domain.

Immediate Source of Acquisition note

The Nehemiah Denton papers were acquired by the Long Island Historical Society (now the Brooklyn Historical Society) through donation from Warren H. Smith in 1953.

Processing Information note

The Nehemiah Denton papers were processed in March 1980 by Anne M. Gordon. Additional processing and description were done in September 2010 by Rachel M. Oleaga.

Related Materials

Related Archival Materials note

The following archival collections held by BHS relate to the Nehemiah Denton papers:

The Nehemiah Denton Wilkins papers (accession number 1974.228) include legal documents concerning property willed by Denton to his grandson, Wilkins.

The Brooklyn Land Records collection (accession number 1979.022) includes an 1863 lease of land by Denton's estate.

The Denton family papers (accession number 1977.584) includes papers of James and Amos Denton of Queens County. Nehemiah Denton is a witness on the will of James.

Court documents surrounding Nehemiah Denton and Hulet Mott can be found in the Gertrude Lefferts Vanderbilt collection (accession number 1974.168).

A 1798 indenture from Hendrick and Phebe Suydam and Isaac and Jane Heyer conveying property with grist mill in Gowanus to Nehemiah Denton is found in the Lefferts family papers (ARC.145).

Archival collections held outside of BHS include the Nehemiah Denton papers (MSS.1602) held by the W.S. Hoole Special Collections Library at the University of Alabama. An on-line finding aid is at http://www.lib.ua.edu/content/findingaids/pdf/mss_1602.pdf.

Print matter held by BHS that relates to the Nehemiah Denton papers are:

Combes, George D.A. *Genealogy of the Descendants of Rev. Richard Denton of Hempstead, L.I.* Manuscript, 1936.

Frost, Josephine C. *Inscriptions from Prospect Cemetery at Jamaica, L.I.* Manuscript, 1910.

Spooner, Alden. *Brooklyn Directories 1822-1829.* 6 vols. Spooner, Brooklyn, 1822-1829.

Controlled Access Headings

Corporate Name(s)

- Old First Reformed Church (Brooklyn, New York, N.Y.).

Family Name(s)

- Denton family

Genre(s)

- Accounts
- Bills of sale
- Daybooks
- Deeds
- Indentures
- Ledgers (account books)
- Promissory notes
- Receipts (financial records)
- Slave bills of sale

Geographic Name(s)

- Brooklyn (New York, N.Y.)
- Gowanus (New York, N.Y.)
- Kings County (N.Y.)

Occupation(s)

- Bankers |z New York (State) |z Kings County
- Millers |z New York (State) |z Kings County

Personal Name(s)

- Denton, Nehemiah, 1773-1844
- Evans, Oliver, 1755-1819

Subject(s)

- Church finance |x Accounting
- Community banks |z New York (State) |z Kings County

- Genealogy
- Mills and mill-work

Collection Inventory

	Dates	Box	Folder
Brooklyn Property Records.	1785-1828	1	1
Content note			
2 items, including a property deed and property lease.			
General note			
Moved to oversize box: one property deed, 1785 and one property lease, 1828.			

Account Books (1 of 2).	1810-1828	1	2
-------------------------	-----------	---	---

Content note

4 items, including account books from The Long Island Bank, Merchants Bank, and Phenix Bank.

Account Books (2 of 2).	1829-1851	1	3
-------------------------	-----------	---	---

Content note

5 items, including account books from the Long Island Bank.

Bills and Receipts (1 of 2).	1824-1844	1	4
------------------------------	-----------	---	---

Content note

Items include receipts for taxes, postage, subscriptions, bills for blacksmiths, clothing, doctors, fuel, laborers, mill supplies, wood, and hardware for house construction.

Bills and Receipts (2 of 2).	1833-1844	1	5
------------------------------	-----------	---	---

Content note

Items include bills and payment receipts for blacksmiths, fuels, laborers, and mill supplies.

Business Records.	1797-1842	1	6
-------------------	-----------	---	---

Content note

9 items, including mill real estate plans and license to use patented milling machinery.

Personal Papers.	1800-1843	1	7
------------------	-----------	---	---

Content note

10 items, including bill of sale for African-American boy, property sale contracts, and estate matters of Samuel Denton.

Receipt Book/Pew Rental Lists.	1817-1826	1	8
--------------------------------	-----------	---	---

Content note

2 items, including a list of pew rentals and owners of the Reformed Dutch Church.

William Skidmore Papers.	1817-1818	1	9
--------------------------	-----------	---	---

Content note

4 items, not directly related to Denton.

Oversize materials.	2	1	
---------------------	---	---	--
