

Guide to Francis V. Morrell's Recollections of Old Williamsburgh 1973.084

Finding aid prepared by Robyn Hjernstad

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Describing Archives: A Content Standard

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2010
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Summary Information

Repository	Brooklyn Historical Society
Creator	Morrell, Francis Vandervoort, 1844-1922
Title	Francis V. Morrell's Recollections of Old Williamsburgh
Date	circa 1915
Extent	0.1 Linear feet in one folder
Language	English
Language of Materials	Materials in English.
Text [Box]	A0001
Container	1973.084 (1 folder)
Abstract	Francis V. Morrell's manuscript "Recollections of Old Williamsburgh" (circa 1915) contains colorful descriptions of the social, economic, geographic, and built environments of the city of Williamsburgh (now Williamsburg, Brooklyn) during the mid-nineteenth century. Morrell's memoir includes entries on various residents of Williamsburgh, especially in the context of their occupations as druggist, school teacher, etc.

Biographical/Historical note

Francis Vandervoort Morrell (1844-1922) grew up in the city of Williamsburgh (now Williamsburg, Brooklyn); his written manuscript herein describes the people and places of his childhood. Morrell's father, by the same name, was a wealthy man of Williamsburgh. While he spent some years in the insurance industry, Morrell's interest in genealogy led him to compile numerous genealogies later in life, such as *The ancestry and posterity of Cornelius Henry Tiebout of Brooklyn* (1910), and the *Genealogy of the Meserole family of Greenpoint* (1915).

Scope and Contents

Francis V. Morrell's manuscript "Recollections of Old Williamsburgh" describes the social, economic, geographic, and built environments of old Williamsburgh, Brooklyn during the mid-nineteenth century. This memoir-like document is organized around 24 separate topics, including Williamsburgh Village, Williamsburgh City, schools, ferries, shipyards, storekeepers and businessmen, and a cannon named Old Sal. Morrell's recollections describe in detail the layout of the financial area of Williamsburgh, centered around Woodhull Street and City Hall; as well as surrounding villages such as Bedford and Bushwick. Also included herein are many detailed descriptions of townspeople, some of whom were non-white residents of the city, such as "Happy Jack," a middle-aged African American man whose moving services were often called upon by the people of Williamsburgh and whose "whistle could be heard at all times." Also included herein is an illustrated entry for "The Fountain Inn," the principal meeting place of the city for political and leisurely activities. Morrell outlines the layout of the streets of Williamsburgh along with many of the prominent businesses on Grand, 2nd, 4th, and Woodhull Streets. Numerous descriptions are included of storekeepers in Williamsburgh, highlighting their specialties and location, such as Atwater, the druggist who sold Morrell and his childhood friends molasses peppermint sticks. Among the other townspeople described in this manuscript are Jonathan S. Burr, Richard Laycroft, Noah Waterbury, and Honey in the Comb. Entries for the Williamsburgh Gazette and the Bushwick Church are also included. Morrell also includes a rough list, based on a published pamphlet, of townspeople whose homes had the highest value.

Arrangement note

This manuscript is in one folder, in one manuscript box, in the order imposed by the creator.

Administrative Information

Publication Information

Brooklyn Historical Society 2010

Conditions Governing Access

Open to researchers without restriction.

Conditions Governing Use note

Material in this collection is in the public domain.

Processing Information note

Manuscript processed by Robyn Hjermsstad in December 2010.

Controlled Access Headings

Genre(s)

- Memoirs

Geographic Name(s)

- Brooklyn (New York, N.Y.) |x Buildings, structures, etc.
- Brooklyn (New York, N.Y.) |x Church history
- Brooklyn (New York, N.Y.) |x History
- Brooklyn (New York, N.Y.) |x Social conditions |y 19th century
- Brooklyn (New York, N.Y.) |x Social life and customs |y 19th century

- Williamsburg (New York, N.Y.)

Personal Name(s)

- Morrell, Francis Vandervoort, 1844-1922

Subject(s)

- African Americans |z New York (State) |z Kings County
- Public schools |z New York (State) |z Kings County
- Shipyards |z New York (State) |z Kings County