

ArMs 1977.285  
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0.5 cu ft (in 2 doc. boxes)  
Boxes A0240-A0241  
(141 items)  
4C – 6.3.D

BREVOORT FAMILY PAPERS  
(1760-1879)

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## Introduction

This collection contains documents regarding the personal and business affairs of four generations of the Brevoort Family, a prosperous nineteenth-century family of New York and Brooklyn. There are no restrictions on the collection. The bulk of the Brevoort Family papers reside in other repositories.

## Provenance

Gift of the Estate of Ruth Wright Brevoort, December, 1966. Letter in accession folder attests to J. Carson Brevoort as an early benefactor and president of the Long Island Historical Society. Finding aid prepared and materials foldered by Robert Sink (Brooklyn Rediscovery), October 5, 1978. Paper finding aid scanned by Pratt GATEWAI intern Cesar Garza, March, 2006. Edited, re-formatted, and folder titles re-numbered and amplified by Dr. Pettit, December, 2006-February, 2007.

## Biographical Note

The first members of the Brevoort family in America came from Holland prior to 1655 and soon thereafter settled in Bushwick, then a separate village that did not become part of Brooklyn until 1855. After twenty years there, they returned to New York where the family prospered.

Henry Brevoort (1747-1841) was a successful farmer whose lands lay just outside of the early city limits of New York. His estate consisted of 86 acres between 9th street and 18th Street, bounded by Fifth Avenue on the west and the Bowery on the east, thus part of today's West Village. The opening of Broadway up to 23rd Street forced New York City street commissioners to create a dog-leg bend at 10th Street, as Brevoort's was determined to prevent the disruption of his estate. Brevoort and son Henry, Jr. prevented the opening of 11th Street between Broadway and the Bowery in the 1830's and '40's to prevent the destruction of the old family farm house.

Henry Brevoort, Jr. (1782-1848) was widely respected for his adventurous travels and artistic interests. He accompanied Lewis and Clark on their expedition to the Pacific Northwest, 1803-06, and he spent a great deal of time in the North American wilderness working for John Jacob Astor's American Fur Company. He was equally at home and well received in the best salons in Europe during his travels abroad. Henry Brevoort, Jr. was a close friend of Washington Irving's and was primarily responsible for the publication of Irving's Sketch Book.

J. Carson Brevoort (1818-1887), Henry Jr.'s son, was educated in Europe during his parents' travels. He graduated from Baron Fellenberg's school in Hofwyl, Switzerland and then earned a degree in civil engineering from the École Centrale des Arts et Manufactures in Paris. He served as Washington Irving's private secretary following Irving's appointment as United States Minister to Spain in 1842. Brevoort married Elizabeth Dorothea Lefferts in 1845 and moved to Brooklyn. There he managed the large land holdings of his father-in-law, Judge Leffert Lefferts. In Brooklyn, Brevoort gained renown for his scholarly interest and public service. He studied history, entomology and ichthyology and also served for many years as a member of the Brooklyn Board of Education and the Board of Water Commissioners. Brevoort also helped to found the Long Island Historical Society in 1863, served as its President for 10 years and was a Director of the Society until his death.

J. Carson Brevoort's only child, Henry L. Brevoort (1849-1895), followed his father's interest in engineering and became one of the country's foremost patent and invention lawyers, with a client list

that included Westinghouse, Western Union and the New York and Brooklyn Bridge Company. He was also a founder in 1890 of the Brevoort Savings Bank in Brooklyn.

### Scope and Content Note

The Brevoort Family Papers contain 141 items for the period 1760-1879 relating to the personal and the business lives of family members. The bulk of the papers are from 1828-1847, chiefly the papers of Henry Brevoort, Jr. and J. Carson Brevoort. Nearly sixty percent of the collection consists of correspondence, and most of these are letters from J. Carson Brevoort to family members. Carson's letters deal primarily with family and school news, although eight letters from 1841 describe an expedition into Quebec Province to survey the area and to take daguerreotypes of the landscape. Legal documents make up fifteen per cent of the collection, including estate records, land conveyances and business documents. The balance of the collection consists of genealogical notes, printed matter, certificates and a few non-Brevoort items. Nb: the "series" appellation for the different generations of Brevoorts was discarded, MHP, 2007.

### Container List

Henry Brevoort, 1747-1841

<u>Box</u>	<u>Folder Title</u>	<u>Dates</u>
A0240 1	Correspondence, Deed (5 <sup>th</sup> Ave/10 <sup>th</sup> St), City of New York to HB w/map	1828, 1874, 75
2	Estate papers: 1836 will, witnessed by Washington Irving and two undated memos	1836

Henry Brevoort, Jr. (1782-1848)

3.	Correspondence	
	HB, Jr. to E. Fellenberg, draft	1831
	E. Fellenberg to HB, Jr., ALS	1832, 1833
	Henry Brevoort (nephew) to HB Jr., ALS	1841
	D. W. Lott to HB, Jr, ALS, 1846.	
	_____ to HB, Jr., ALS re: sale of property	1847
	Legal Documents	
	HB, Jr. to Henry Cary and James Renwick, trustees for the estate of Laura C. Brevoort, bond and assignment of mortgage	1833, 1837, 2 items
	Jesse Delano to HB, Jr., bond and mortgage	1836, 3 items.
	C. Swan to HB, lease	1836
	HB, Jr. Elias Brevoort and the trustees of Margaret A. Renwick, partition agreement (sheepskin parchment)	1843
4.	Eleventh Street (New York City) - printed reports by the N.Y.C. Board of Aldermen	1843-1848, 3 items
	Correspondence re: Eleventh Street	
	_____ to Isaac L. Varian, draft	1844
	J. A. Constant to HB, Jr., ALS	1845

<u>Box</u>	<u>Folder Title</u>	<u>Dates</u>
A0240	4 Continued	
	Robert Boyd to HB, Jr., ALS	1845
	R. F. Carson, to I. Varian, ALS	1845
	HB, Jr. to _____, draft	1845.
	Oscar F. Stibbins to I. Varian, ALS	1845
	John Pettigrew to Varian, ALS	1845
	Robert Boyd to HB, Jr., ALS	1845
	HB, Jr. to Varian (?), drafts	ca.1845, 3 items.
	Draft re: tax assessments	n.d.
	Miscellaneous re: Eleventh Street	
	Drafts, memos, lists	n.d., 16 items.
5	Broadsides re: Eleventh Street	
	Tax assessments	1844
	Supreme Court hearing on the opening of Eleventh St.	1849
6	Estate documents	
	Will, witnessed by Washington Irving,	1835
	Letters Testamentary to J. Carson Brevoort	1848
	Memo	n.d.
	List of his real property holdings	n.d.
J. Carson Brevoort (1818-1887)		
A0241	7 Correspondence from JCB, ALS	1828-1861, 59 items.
	Henry N. Brevoort to JCB, ALS	1879.
8	Title Abstract for Brooklyn property owned by JCB and Elizabeth Dorothea Brevoort	1876, 2 items
9	Certificates	1836-1873, 4 items
Henry L. Brevoort (1849-1895)		
10.	Scrapbook - clippings about engineering, railroads and steamboats.	
11.	Account of a journey to "Northern Woods, Canada," 127 page Ms.,	1873
12.	Speeches on steam engines	
	"The Indicator," 61 p., ms.	n .d.
	"The Steam Engine," 120 p., ms.	1874.
Brevoort Family and genealogy materials		
13.	Quit Claim, Elias and Leah Brevoort to Hendrick Brevoort, "Theatrical Observer," from a Brevoort family trip to London, has a typed note on the title page	1760 1830
	William Brevoort to his parents, ALS, 2 items.	1832-33
	Genealogical notes, 8 items	
14.	Correspondence and genealogical miscellany	
	Power of Attorney, George Shea to Charles McCarty	1790
	New Utrecht Burial Ground, agreement to purchase, ADS	1791
	Farmers Brewery (Brooklyn), business agreement duplicate,	1817
	Note on U.S. geography	n.d.