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Brooklyn Historical Society Launches New Digital Exhibit ***An American Family Grows in Brooklyn:*** ***The Lefferts Family Papers at Brooklyn Historical Society*** <http://www.brooklynhistory.org/exhibitions/lefferts/>

December 8, 2011: Brooklyn, NY – **Brooklyn Historical Society** (BHS) is proud to launch [An American Family Grows in Brooklyn: The Lefferts Family Papers at Brooklyn Historical Society](http://www.brooklynhistory.org/exhibitions/lefferts/). This new digital exhibit examines Brooklyn's complex history through the eyes of one family and includes an image gallery showcasing high-quality reproductions of seventy-seven items from the Lefferts family papers. In collaboration with BHS librarians and archivists, BHS's public historian Julie Golia drew on the institution's rich archival collections to tell the compelling history of Brooklyn over the centuries.



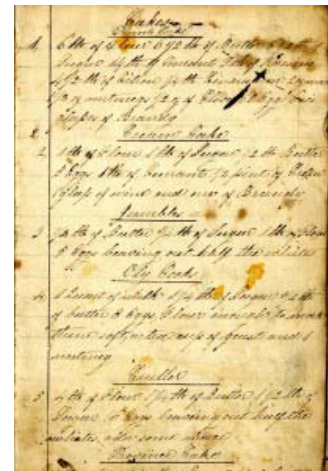
Gold framed rose-tinted photograph of back of Lefferts homestead in snow; Lefferts family papers, ARC.145, box 5, folder 9; Brooklyn Historical

An American Family Grows in Brooklyn tells the story of one of Kings County's oldest families. The digital exhibit chronicles the Lefferts family members' arrival to frontier Flatbush in 1660 from the Netherlands; the family's role in building Kings County's booming agricultural economy; their use of enslaved laborers up until New York's Emancipation Day in 1827; and their relationships with other Dutch families in the region. Items like a nineteenth-century cookbook or a list of expenses from a 1791 funeral reveal the material conditions that shaped the everyday lives of members of the Lefferts clan. Other documents, like the dozens of slave indentures held in the collection, offer glimpses into the experiences of a less-chronicled but equally important group of Brooklynites: enslaved African Americans.

The inspiration for this digital exhibit came in 2010, when the [Lefferts Historic House](#) donated a rich collection of [Lefferts family papers](#) to Brooklyn Historical Society. Included were genealogies, bibles, recipe books, financial papers, personal recollections, and many other documents that offer an intimate glimpse into the lives and labors of one Brooklyn family over four centuries. The collection illustrates some of the most important themes of Brooklyn's history: slavery and freedom, the development of Flatbush from farmland to suburb, the experiences of women in colonial Brooklyn, and many more. Thanks to a generous grant from the [Leon Levy Foundation](#), BHS spent much of 2010 and 2011 conserving, organizing, and processing these materials.

An American Family in Brooklyn represents a new direction in BHS's commitment to making our archival collections accessible to researchers, history buffs, students, and other Brooklyn enthusiasts worldwide.

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Mrs. Lefferts' recipe book, circa 1800s; Lefferts family papers, ARC.145, box 6, folder 6; Brooklyn Historical Society.