

INVENTORY OF THE
BENNETT COLLECTION
IN THE OLD DARTMOUTH HISTORICAL SOCIETY
WHALING MUSEUM LIBRARY

Content: Business records and personal papers of a Fairhaven
and New Bedford, Mass., family, 1765-1908.

Volume: 1 linear foot.

Provenance: A gift of Clara Bennett, 1918 and 1930.

Restrictions: None.

Processed By: Barbara E. Austen.

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National Endowment for the Humanities.

INTRODUCTION

Materials in this collection were given to the Old Dartmouth Historical Society by Clara Bennett in 1918 and 1930.

HISTORICAL NOTE

Members of the Bennett family have resided in New Bedford and Fairhaven, Mass., since the mid-eighteenth century. Existing records indicate that these individuals included a blacksmith and merchant, Robert Bennett (1746-1818) and a farmer, James Bennett (fl. 1733). The first member of the family known to have achieved business prominence was Robert Bennett's grandson, Thomas Bennett (ca. 1790-1865). Born at Fairhaven, Mass., Thomas began his career as a merchant seaman at age eighteen. While still maintaining close ties with both Fairhaven and New Bedford, he made his home in New York City, where he became the commander of the packet ship NEW YORK, a passenger vessel of the Black Ball Line. He also commanded several other ships, presumably merchant vessels, and was part owner of the RAJAH (Bark) of New Bedford. Captain Bennett had two sons, Thomas, Jr. (1820-1898) and Robert (1829-1905). Thomas, Jr., made a name for himself in New Bedford in the design, construction, and administration of Wamsutta Mills. His experience in cotton manufacture in New Orleans and Georgia made him an excellent candidate for superintendent of the Mills, a position he held for twenty-seven years. His brother, Robert, also worked at Wamsutta Mills, first as a clerk and then as assistant supervisor.

In 1853, Thomas Bennett, Jr., married Sibyl Williams. Children from this marriage included William, who died in 1875, and Clara (1853-1929). Thomas Bennett, Jr., retired from Wamsutta Mills in 1874 and died in 1898.

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

Papers in this collection reflect the activities of members of the Bennett family of Fairhaven and New Bedford, Mass., between 1765 and 1908. The material concentrates on Thomas Bennett, a ship captain, and his son, Thomas Bennett, Jr. The captain's papers principally consist of business correspondence; deeds, records, and other legal documents; and bills and receipts from between 1774 and 1852. Also among his papers are manifests, bills of health, a protest, bills, lists of stores and provisions, and similar ship's papers. Thomas Bennett, Jr.'s papers include business correspondence concerning

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE (cont.)

western mining interests and Wamsutta Mills, 1832-ca. 1889; as well as personal correspondence, deeds of personal property, estate records and records relating to a court case of Bennett vs. Mara about a right-of-way, 1765-1908; a series of notebooks concerning Wamsutta Mills containing production, consumption, purchasing, and labor accounts, engineering records, and customer orders, 1850-1870; stocks, dividends, and memoranda relating to the mill from 1846-1880; a personal financial notebook, ca. 1880; a historical sketch of Wamsutta Mills; and notes and clippings on various subjects, dating 1833-1866..

Other family members are represented in the collection. Robert Bennett's papers consist of deeds and leases from 1770-1819 and also encompass the papers of a John Bennett, including a deed, writ of execution, and intention of marriage, dating from 1773-1822. The papers of James Bennett chiefly consist of letters to his brother-in-law, John Hawes, of New Bedford, Mass. The papers of Thomas Bennett's son, Robert, consist of a mortgage, 1833, and his will, 1898. Clara Bennett's papers, ca. 1900-1908, include business correspondence about asbestos mining; personal correspondence; two inventories of real and personal property; and a stock memorandum.

In addition to these papers, Old Dartmouth Historical Society also owns several objects relating to the Bennett family. Included in the holdings are portraits of family members, a sofa from Thomas Bennett's packet ship NEW YORK, and several decorative objects.

- Sub-group 1. Robert Bennett Papers, 1770-1822. Legal documents of Robert and of John Bennett. 15 items.
- Sub-group 2. James Bennett Papers, 1804-ca. 1819. Letters to brother-in-law, John Hawes, and receipts. 5 items.
- Sub-group 3. Thomas Bennett Papers, 1774-1852. Business correspondence; legal documents; ship's papers; bills and receipts. 68 items.
- Sub-group 4. Thomas Bennett, Jr., Papers, 1765-1908. Business and personal correspondence; legal documents; financial records; historical sketches; notes, clippings, and miscellany. 74 items.

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE (cont.)

- Sub-group 5. Robert Bennett Papers, 1883-1898.
Legal documents. 2 items.
- Sub-group 6. Clara Bennett Papers, ca. 1900-1908.
Business and personal correspondence; legal
documents. 7 items.

DESCRIPTION

Sub-group 1. Robert Bennett Papers, 1770-1822

Series A. Legal Documents, 1770-1822

- Folder 1. Lease, 1770; deeds, 1786-1819
- " 2. Deed, 1773; writ of execution, 1818;
intention of marriage, 1822, of John Bennett

Sub-group 2. James Bennett Papers, 1804-ca. 1819

Series A. Correspondence, 1804-1813

- Folder 1. 1804, 1810, 1813

Series B. Receipts, ca. 1819

- Folder 1. ca. 1819

Sub-group 3. Thomas Bennett Papers, 1771-1852

Series A. Correspondence, 1835, 1842

- Folder 1. 1835, 1842

Series B. Legal Documents, 1774-1852

Sub-series 1. Deeds, 1774-1852

- Folder 1. 1774, 1779
- " 2. 1819-1829
- " 3. 1830-1833
- " 4. 1834-1847
- " 5. 1851, 1852

Sub-series 2. Estate records, 1802-1834

- Folder 1. 1802, 1816, 1834

Sub-series 3. Insurance papers, 1826

- Folder 1. 1826

Sub-series 4. Patent rights, 1830

- Folder 1. 1830

Sub-series 5. Wills, 1834

- Folder 1. 1834

Sub-series 6. Seamen's Protection Papers, 1838

- Folder 1. 1838

Sub-group 3 (cont.)

Series C. Ship's Papers, 1796-ca. 1839

- Folder 1. BRAGANZA (Ship), ca. 1839
- " 2. CAMBRIA (Ship), 1838; HOPE (Ship), 1796;
NEW YORK (Packet ship), ca. 1825, 1830;
RAJAH (Bark), 1835

Series D. Bills and Receipts, 1828-1835

- Folder 1. 1828-1835

Sub-group 4. Thomas Bennett, Jr., Papers, 1765-1908

Series A. Correspondence, 1832-ca. 1889

- Folder 1. Incoming, 1832-1882
- " 2. Outgoing, 1855, 1864, 1889, ca. 1889

Series B. Legal Documents, 1765-1908

Sub-series 1. Deeds, 1831-1877

- Folder 1. 1831, 1868, 1871, 1877

Sub-series 2. Estate records, 1881-1908

- Volume 1. 1871-1872

- Folder 1. 1881, ca. 1906, 1908

- Folder 2: *Property plat maps, 1847-1848*

Sub-series 3. Court proceedings: Bennett et. al.
vs. Mara, 1765-1890

- Folder 1. Complaint and decision, 1889, 1890

- " 2-3. Deeds, 1796-1884

- " 4. Memoranda of related deeds, 1765-ca. 1850

- Volume 1. Day book of Daniel Ripley containing account
of litigation proceedings, 1887

- Folder 5: *Items removed from Vol. 1*

Series C. Notebooks, 1850-1870

- Volume 1. Production and fuel usage records, 1850-1852

- " 2. Production and purchasing records, 1855-1858

- " 3. Labor accounts, 1857-1864

- " 4-5. Engineering records, 1868-1869

- " 6. Order book, 1870

Series D. Financial Records, 1846-ca. 1880

- Folder 1. Stocks and dividends, 1847-1880

- " 2. Projected costs for starting Wamsutta Mill
No. 3, 1846

- " 3. Memoranda book, ca. 1880

Sub-group 4 (cont.)

Series E. Historical Sketches, 1882-ca. 1890

Folder 1. Wamsutta Mills, 1882-ca. 1890

Series F. Notes, Clippings, and Miscellany, 1833-1886

Folder 1. Notes concerning portraits of Peter the Great and Catherine by Arnola Boonen, ca. 1860

" 2. Memorandum on mining, ca. 1880

" 3. Newspaper clippings concerning Wamsutta Mills and western mining interests, 1861-1886; obituary of son, William, 1875

" 4. Bridge passes, 1832, 1833

Volume 1. Volume presented to Bennett on retirement in 1874. Includes signatures of Wamsutta Mills employees

Folder 5: Items removed from Vol. 1

Sub-group 5. Robert Bennett Papers, 1883-1898

Series A. Legal Documents, 1883-1898

Folder 1. Mortgage, 1883; will, 1898

Sub-group 6. Clara Bennett Papers, ca. 1900-1908

Series A. Correspondence, ca. 1900-1908

Folder 1. ca. 1900-1908

Series B. Legal Documents, ca. 1904-1908

Folder 1. Inventories, 1904, ca. 1904; stock memorandum, 1908

ADDED ENTRIES

. Account books--New Bedford, Mass.--1850-1870
 Bennett, Clara, 1853-1929
 Bennett, James, fl. 1804
 Bennett, Robert, 1746-1818
 Bennett, Robert, 1829-1905
 Bennett, Thomas, ca. 1790-1865
 Bennett, Thomas, Jr., 1820-1898
 Business records--Mass.--New Bedford
 Businessmen--Mass.--New Bedford
 Buying, Industrial SEE Industrial procurement
 Captains of ships SEE Shipmasters
 Control, Inventory SEE Inventory control
 Cotton--Prices--Mass.--New Bedford
 Cotton manufacture--Mass.--New Bedford
 Cotton trade--Mass.--New Bedford
 Engineering, Industrial SEE Industrial engineering
 Facility layout SEE Plant layout
 Factories--Layout SEE Plant layout
 Factories--Management SEE Factory management
 Factory layout SEE Plant layout
 Factory management--Mass.--New Bedford
 Foremen SEE Supervisors, Industrial
 Industrial buying SEE Industrial procurement
 Industrial engineering--Mass.--New Bedford
 Industrial procurement--Mass.--New Bedford
 Industrial purchasing SEE Industrial procurement
 Industrial supervisors SEE Supervisors, Industrial
 Inventory control
 Inventory management SEE Inventory control
 Layout, Factory SEE Plant layout
 Layout, Plant SEE Plant layout
 Mail-boats SEE Packets
 Management engineering SEE Industrial engineering
 Management of factories SEE Factory management
 Manufacturing engineering SEE Production engineering
 Masters of ships SEE Shipmasters
 Materials management--Mass.--New Bedford
 Merchant ships--Mass.--New Bedford
 New Bedford, Mass.--Industries
 Packet-ships SEE Packets
 Packets
 Passenger ships--Mass.--New Bedford
 Plant engineering
 Plant layout
 Process engineering SEE Production engineering
 Procurement, Industrial SEE Industrial procurement
 Production engineering
 Purchasing, Industrial SEE Industrial procurement
Rajah (Bark)

ADDED ENTRIES (cont.)

Shipmasters--Mass.--New Bedford
Ships--Officers SEE Shipmasters
Ship's papers
Shop management .SEE Factory management
Stock control SEE Inventory control
Stock-room keeping SEE Stores or stock-room keeping
Stores or stock-room keeping
Supervisors, Industrial
Wages--Textile workers--Mass.--New Bedford
Wamsutta Mills, New Bedford, Mass.
Wills--Mass.--New Bedford
Braganza (Ship)
Cambria (Ship)
New York (Ship)

SEPARATIONS LIST

Removed to broadsides collection:

S-g 4 Series B

S-s 3 #5

"Perry's Old Flagship," 1875.

Ricketson, D. "The Return, 1845-1875," 1876.

Removed to maps collection:

S-g 4
Series B

S-s 2

Folder 2

- 6 plat maps of property bounded by Parker, Chestnut, and Cottage Streets, ca. 1893.
- 3 plat maps of property bounded by Market and Union Streets.
- 2 plat maps of property of J.A. Parker's estate, 1869.
- 1 plat map of land purchased by Wamsutta Mills, ca. 1847.
- 1 plat map of Wamsutta Mills complex, ca. 1870.

Removed to objects collection:

S-g 4
Series F
Folder 5

- Post card, n.d.
- 5 Wamsutta trademark notices, 1867.

Removed to photographs collection:

Photograph of unidentified young woman [Ripley?]

Removed to printed collection:

- Pan Advertisement for Lamb's Cotton Industry of the United States, n.d.
- Pan Bennett, William. "Young America Printing Office Circular for 1875."
- Pan Bryce, William & Co. Supplement to Telegraphic Code, n.d.
- "Cotton Crop of the United States for the Year Ending September 1, 1876."
- Hough, Henry Beetle. Wamsutta of New Bedford, 1946.
- The Specimen Sheet, 1875.
- Pan The Star, June 26 to September 4, 1875.