



Brooklyn Navy Yard Development Corporation Archives
Guide to the Dwight Demeritt collection
1816-2008
MC/41

Brooklyn Navy Yard Development Corporation Archives
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Description is in English.

Descriptive Summary

Title: Dwight Demeritt collection

Creator: Demeritt, Dwight

Date(s): 1816-2008

Quantity: 3 small document boxes, 1 oversized folder, 4 artifacts.

Language of Materials: English

Call Number: MC/4

Administrative/Biographical History

Dwight Demeritt is a historian and collector who graduated from the University of Maine in 1951 and has since published several books including *Maine Made Guns & Their Makers* (2003) and *Brooklyn Gunsmiths and Gunmakers* (1966). He has photographed scenes in Brooklyn as an amateur photographer, including the grounds at the Brooklyn Navy Yard.

The Brooklyn Navy Yard, previously known as the New York Naval Shipyard, has its origins in the federal government's purchase of the land adjacent to Wallabout Bay for \$40,000 in 1801, and the subsequent conversion of the land into an active US Navy shipyard five years later. Over the course of its history, more than 230 naval warships and auxiliary vessels were built at the Yard. Additionally, during World War II alone, more than 5,000 ships were repaired, overhauled, or converted there. The first ship built was the USS Ohio, launched in 1820, while the last ship launched was the USS Duluth (LPD-6) in 1965. Other

historic vessels constructed or launched at the Navy Yard include Robert Fulton's steam frigate, the Fulton, the USS Arizona, the USS Missouri, and the USS Antietam.

In 1824, the Navy purchased an additional 25 acres near the Yard, on which it established the Brooklyn Naval Hospital. The main hospital building was completed in 1838. By 1850, the hospital annex was a walled-in, self-contained parcel of land with a gatehouse, a laboratory, and a cemetery. In 1864, the surgeon's residence was constructed. When the shipyard expanded during World War II, it took over the land of the former Wallabout Market, located between the Yard and the annex, and the physical separation between the Yard and the Hospital was eliminated.

During the Civil War, the Yard employed about 6,000 people, and by 1938 it provided jobs for over 10,000. At the height of World War II, nearly 70,000 people were employed at the Yard, and it had grown to encompass 291 acres with 270 major buildings, 24 miles of railroad tracks, 23,278 linear feet of crane tracks, 18 miles of paved roads, 16,495 feet of berthing space, 9 piers, 6 dry docks, and 22 shops housing 98 different trades.

In 1966, the Navy decommissioned the Yard, and a year later most of the property was sold to the City of New York. While the Yard lost its naval shipbuilding presence, it retained residual administrative support functions as part of Naval Station New York, which occupied the former hospital annex and some adjacent buildings until it too was closed in 1989. The City eventually acquired the former naval station annex in 1993, taking full control over the 300-acre property.

The City delegated the Yard for private commercial use. It was first administered by the Commerce Labor and Industry Corporation of Kings (CLICK), then by the Brooklyn Navy Yard Development Corporation (BNYDC), a private, non-profit development corporation that manages and develops the Yard on behalf of the City with the aim of growing and maintaining an industrial manufacturing base in Brooklyn.

From 1969 to 1979, Seatrain Shipbuilding was the main tenant under CLICK. During its operation, the company produced four Very Large Crude Carriers (VLCCs), eight barges, one icebreaker barge, and two roll-on/roll-off ferries. Another important early tenant was Coastal Dry Dock & Repair Corporation, which leased space in the Yard between 1971 and 1987.

In the 1980s, BNYDC began a long-term effort to diversify the tenant base at the Yard, and by 2001 nearly 275 companies employing over 6,000 people were in residence. BNYDC undertook sustainability initiatives to support a rapidly growing cluster of green manufacturers, and large spaces were updated to accommodate small industrial enterprises that reflected the diversity, energy, and creativity of the community. BNYDC's Employment Center expanded, a Summer Youth Program was established, and a shuttle service to the subway is launched to provide better access and encourage the use of mass transit. The City took note of BNYDC's success and funded major upgrades to the Yard's basic infrastructure, some of which dated to the Civil War era. The Yard's largest expansion since WWII was underway.

The Yard is now home to over 400 businesses employing more than 7,000 people and generating over \$2 billion per year in economic impact for the City. With the openings of Building 77 and Dock 72, redevelopment of Admirals Row, expansion of Steiner Studios, and other projects, employment at the Yard will more than double in the next few years, jumping from 7,000 to 17,000+ by 2020. Building on the Yard's history as the economic heart of Brooklyn, the 300-acre waterfront asset offers a critical pathway to the middle class for many New Yorkers.

Scope and Content

The Dwight Demeritt collection consists of items created and collected by historian Dwight Demeritt around the turn of the 21st century, relating to or about the history of the Brooklyn Navy Yard, with materials spanning from 1816 to 2008. Materials include photographs, stereoscopes, engraved images, postcards, weaponry artifacts, newspaper clippings, a monograph, auction catalogs, reports, inventories, photocopies of historical narratives, and correspondence and notes by Demeritt.

Related Materials

Location of Copies: Items in this collection may have been digitized and if so, are featured in [BNY Collections](#), the BNYDC Archives' digital library. Only those items that have digital reproductions contain an Object ID listed in the Container List below. Use the Object ID or title of the item when searching BNY Collections.

System of Arrangement

This collection contains six series: Research files, Photographs, Postcards, Stereoscopes, Images, and Artifacts.

Access Points

New York Naval Shipyard
Demeritt, Dwight
Artillery
Auction Catalogs
Clippings
Drawings (visual works)
Engravings
Foote, Andrew H. (1806-1863)
Hospitals, Naval and marine
Inventories
Monographs
Naval battles
Naval museums
Photocopies
Photographs
Postcards
Reports
Sailors
Shipbuilding industry—Employees
Shipbuilding--Equipment and supplies
Shipbuilding--United States
Ships
Stereoscopes
United States Navy

Administrative Information

Accession Number(s): n/a

Acquisition Notes: This collection was donated by Dwight Demeritt. There is no donor agreement form or deed of gift in the collection documentation folder, but there is a detailed listing of donated items as well as correspondence between donor and archivist dating back to April 2009.

Processing Notes: Processed by Katie Daniels in June 2015. Collection maintenance by Chelsea Reil. Two duplicate stereoscopes and two duplicate postcards were weeded during collection maintenance.

Access and Use

Access Restrictions: This collection is open for research.

Use Restrictions: Material in this collection is made available for use in research, teaching, and private study, pursuant to U.S. Copyright law. The use must assume full responsibility for any use of the material, including but not limited to, infringement of copyright and publication rights of reproduced material. Please see the BNYDC Archives' Policy on Access and Use for more information about reproductions and permissions to publish. Any material used for academic research or otherwise should be credited using the citation below.

Preferred Citation: Published citations should take the following form: Identification of item, date (if known); Dwight Demeritt collection; MC/41; Brooklyn Navy Yard Development Corporation Archives, Brooklyn, NY.

Container List

Series 1: Research Files

Scope and Contents Note: Includes notes and correspondence by Demeritt regarding his research on the Brooklyn Navy Yard, as well as original and photocopied publications covering various aspects of the history of the Yard such as: reports, sales and auction catalogs, artillery inventories, newspaper articles from the Brooklyn Eagle (c. 1800s), newspaper clippings into the 21st century, photocopies of various historical narratives, and an edition of *Naval Battles and Our New Navy* by Edward Shippen (1894).

Arrangement Note: This series is arranged chronologically.

Box 1 (3-B-2-6)	Title	Date	Object ID
Folder 2	Research files	1882-1999	
Folder 3	- Brooklyn Eagle Articles	1843-1902	
Folder 4	- Clippings	1901-2008	
Folder 5	- Correspondence + Notes	1989-1997	
Folder 6-8	- Publications	1816-2000	

Series 2: Photographs

Scope and Contents Note: Black and white scenes of the Brooklyn Navy Yard; most were taken by Demeritt in 1989 from the roof of Building 291.

Arrangement Note: This series is arranged chronologically.

Box 1 (3-B-2-6)	Title	Date	Object ID
Folder 1	Photographs	1923-1989 (bulk 1989)	

Series 3: Postcards

Scope and Contents Note: Collection of postcards showing scenes and themes relating to the Brooklyn Navy Yard, including ships, barracks and various buildings, dry docks, landscapes and general scenes of the Yard, the training/receiving ship Vermont (c. 1908), workshops, Wallabout Market, sailors, workers, and the Naval YMCA. Many of the postcards were used and show notes and messages sent from various Yard personnel.

Arrangement Note: This series was arranged by the donor.

Box 2 (3-B-2-2)	Title	Date	Object ID
	Postcards	1898-1952	
	USS Kearsarge		10136
	Monument erected to Dead Officers, and Cannons of the War of 1812		10137
	Revolutionary Relics at Navy Yard, Brooklyn, N. Y.		10138
	Monument erected to Dead Officers, and Cannons of the War of 1812		10139
	View of Navy Yard, Brooklyn, N.Y.		10140
	View of Navy Yard, Brooklyn, N.Y.		10141
	U.S.S. Connecticut		10142
	U.S. Submarine Boats "Porpoise and Shark" in Winter Quarters, Brooklyn Navy Yard, N.Y.		10143
	Brooklyn Navy Yard, N.Y.		10144
	View of the Navy Yard from East River, N.Y.		10145
	View of the Navy Yard from East River, N.Y.		10147
	View of the Navy Yard from East River, N.Y.		10148
	Dry Dock at the Navy Yard, Brooklyn, N.Y.		10149
	Diver preparing to descend, Brooklyn Navy Yard, Brooklyn, N. Y.		10150
	Dry Dock 1, facing Third Street, Navy Yard, Brooklyn, NY		10151
	U.S. Submarine Boat "Plunger", Brooklyn Navy Yard		10152
	U.S. Submarine Boat "Plunger", Brooklyn Navy Yard		10153
	B. E. View of Brooklyn Navy Yard. U.S.S. Indiana in Dry Dock.		10154
	Battleship Missouri in Dry Dock at Navy Yard, Brooklyn, N. Y.		10155
	B. E. View of Brooklyn Navy Yard. U.S.S. Indiana in Dry Dock.		10156
	Brooklyn Eagle Postal Card, Series 49, No. 289. Battleship "Colorado" in Dry Dock at Navy Yard.		10157
	U.S. Battleship "Indiana" leaving Brooklyn Navy Yard in Winter on her way to Sea.		10158
	U.S. Armored Cruiser Colorado.		10159
	Bird's Eye View of the U.S. Battleship "Massachusetts" Brooklyn Navy Yard, N.Y.		10160
	Battleship "Connecticut" at Dry Dock, Navy Yard, Brooklyn, N. Y.		10161
	Brooklyn Navy Yard, New York City		10162
	Brooklyn Navy Yard from Fall River Line Boat		10163
	U.S. Cruiser "Brooklyn" leaving Brooklyn Navy Yard for a Cruise.		10164
	Launching of the Dreadnaught, at the U.S. Navy Yard, Brooklyn, N.Y.		10165
	U.S. Cruiser "Brooklyn" firing salute while passing out of Brooklyn Navy Yard on her way to sea.		10166
	Receiving Ship Vermont, Brooklyn Navy Yard.		10167
	Launching of the U.S. Battleship "Connecticut", Brooklyn Navy Yard. Brooklyn, N.Y.		10168
	Receiving Ship Vermont, Brooklyn Navy Yard.		10169
	Brooklyn Eagle Post Card Series 80, No. 475. USNY, Looking North to the East River.		10170
	Cob Dock, Brooklyn Navy Yard, N. Y.		10171
	Super Dreadnaught New York Leaving Brooklyn Navy Yard for Her Endurance Test		10172
	Cob Dock, Brooklyn Navy Yard, N. Y.		10173
	No. 63-Training Ship, Brooklyn Navy Yard. N.Y.		10174
	Cob Dock Ferry - Navy Yard "08 The Texas"		10175
	Brooklyn Eagle Post Card Series 24, No. 144. Inspecting Companies of Marines at the BNY.		10176
	The Old Ferry, Brooklyn Navy Yard, N. Y.		10179
	Brooklyn, N.Y., Navy Yard		10188
	U.S. Marine Barracks, Navy Yard, Brooklyn, N.Y.		10197
	U.S. Marine Barrack, Navy Yard, Brooklyn, NY		10200
	U.S. Marine Barracks, Navy Yard, Brooklyn, N.Y.		10202
	Brooklyn Eagle Post Card, Series 39, No. 230. Spanish Guns and Commandant's Residence, BNY.		10205
	Commandant's Residence, Brooklyn Navy Yard, NY		10206
	Brooklyn Navy Yard		10207
	Bronze Cannon, Spanish War, Brooklyn Navy Yard.		10208
	Commandant's Residence, Brooklyn Navy Yard. Brooklyn, N.Y.		10209
	Wallabout Market, Brooklyn, N.Y.		10210
	The Office, Brooklyn Navy Yard.		10211
	Brooklyn Eagle Post Card, Series 16, No. 92. Wallabout Market and United States Marine Hospital.		10212
	Navy Yard, Brooklyn, N.Y.		10213
	Wallabout-Basin, Brooklyn, N.Y.		10214
	Navy Yard, Brooklyn.		10257
	Paymaster's Office, U.S. Navy, Brooklyn, N.Y.		10258
	Navy Yard, Brooklyn.		10259
	Brooklyn Eagle Post Card, Series 55, No. 328. Naval Prison, Brooklyn Navy Yard.		10260
	Entrance to Navy Yard, Brooklyn, NY		10261
	"Relieving Guard, Sands Street Entrance to Brooklyn Navy Yard", N.Y."		10262
	Entrance to Navy Yard, Brooklyn, NY		10263
	Sands Street Entrance, Brooklyn Navy Yard		10264

Entrance to U.S. Navy Yard, Brooklyn, N.Y.	10265
"Paymaster's Office, Navy Yard, Brooklyn, N.Y.	10266
13 ""Par Excellence""	10279
Entrance to Navy Yard, Brooklyn, NY	10280
U.S. Marines. Formation of Riot Square, at the Navy Yard, Brooklyn	10282
Brooklyn Navy Yard, from the Sands Street Entrance.	10283
Brooklyn Navy Yard, from the Sands Street Entrance.	10284
No. 30-Navy Yard, Brooklyn, NY	10285
Blacksmith Shop, Brooklyn Navy Yard	10287
Joiner Shop, Brooklyn Navy Yard. Brooklyn, N.Y.	10291
Fencing, Brooklyn Navy Yard	10292
Naval Y.M.C.A., Sand Street, Brooklyn, N.Y. [sic. (Sands)]	10294
Brooklyn Branch of the Naval Young Mens Christian Association. Correspondence Room	10296
"The Den", Brooklyn Branch of the Naval Y.M.C.A, Brooklyn NY	10298
View of the Navy Yard Brooklyn NY	11331

Series 4: Stereoscopes

Scope and Contents Note: A total of 71 stereoscopes produced circa 1898 showing images from and relating to the Brooklyn Navy Yard, such as ships, housing and buildings, artillery, sailors, workers, and monuments. Of note are images of the wreckage of the USS Maine in Havana Harbor, Cuba in 1898. There is a partial list of these stereoscopes in the binder in Box 2. 20 stereoscopes from this series have been digitized and added to the digital library. 13 stereoscopes are identified in the list that have not been digitized. The remaining 38 are unlisted and not digitized.

Arrangement Note: This series is arranged alphabetically.

Box 3 (3-B-2-3)	Title	Date	Object ID
	Stereoscopes	c.1898-1899	
(429) The Brooklyn			11000
(972) Brooklyn on Speed Trial			11002
(986) 13-in Guns of the New York			11010
(990) A Gunner of the Iowa			11009
1396 Gun Boat Boston			11007
1397 Gun Boat Boston			11008
1401 Gun Boat Atlanta			11006
American Scenery, Architecture & C			10996
Battle Row Looking Up			10997
Brooklyn Navy Yard			11001
Commandant's Head-Quarters.			10683
Fulton Derrick & Boilers			11005
In Dry Dock, Brooklyn Navy Yard			10999
In the Navy Yard - Cleaning the "Indiana."			11004
Looking Down From the Entrance			10682
Lyceum, Brooklyn			10681
Monument to the Officers and Marines who fell at the Barrier Forts Canton R. China, 1865			10684
Naval Lyceum			10686
New Battleship Maine			10998
Shell Pyramids			10685

Series 5: Images

Scope and Contents Note: Includes engravings and drawings of the landscape, buildings, and ships of the Brooklyn Navy Yard during the mid- to late-1800s. Most of the images are illustrations from old newspapers- including the Scientific American, Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper, and Harper's Weekly- and include the original textual descriptions and/or associated articles from the newspapers. Buildings shown include the Commandant's Residence, the Naval Hospital, and the Lyceum. Also included is an engraved portrait of Admiral Andrew H. Foote U.S.N.

Arrangement Note: This series is arranged chronologically.

Box OS1 (3-B-2-5)	Title	Date	Object ID
Folder 8	Images	1832-1889	
Folder 8	Engraving of Rear Admiral Foote	1880	14746

Series 6: Artifacts

Scope and Contents Note: Includes four objects, including a pistol, a leather fuse pouch, a leather carbine cartridge pouch, and a wooden stereoscopic viewer.

Arrangement Note: This series is arranged chronologically.

Box 4 (3-B-2-4)	Title	Date	Object ID
Object 1	Leather fuse pouch	1863	12398
Object 2	Carbine cartridge box	1869	12397
Object 3	Pistol	1872	12396
Object 4	Stereoscopic viewer	Undated	13349