



Smithsonian

National Museum of American History Kenneth E. Behring Center

Guide to the Bennett Pottery Company

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NMAH Staff

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Table of Contents

Collection Overview	
Administrative Information	1
Biographical Note	1
Scope and Contents	2
Arrangement	2
Names and Subjects	
Container Listing	
Series 1: Biographical	4
Series 2: Correspondence , 1914 1981	5
Series 3: Bennet Pottery Company	6
Series 4: Catalogues, Advertisements, and Stationery	8
Series 5: Photographs	9
Series 6: Notebooks of Formulae and Receipts	11
Series 7: Printed Material	12
Series 8: Ledgers of the Severn Clay Company. (Subsidiary of Bennet Pottery Company)	14

Collection Overview

Repository:	Archives Center, National Museum of American History
Title:	Bennett Pottery Company Records
Date:	1844-1981
Identifier:	NMAH.AC.0213
Creator:	Bennett, Edwin, 1818-1908 (potter) Edwin Bennett Pottery Company
Source:	National Museum of American History (U.S.). Division of Ceramics and Glass
Extent:	4 Cubic feet (9 boxes, 2 map folders)
Language:	English .
Summary:	Collection documents the activities of the Bennett Pottery Company.

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information

Collection donated by Mrs. Portia M. Filbert, 1986, March.

Provenance

Collection transferred to the Archives Center from the Division of Ceramics and Glass (Division of Cultural and Community Life), 5/19/1986.

Processing Information

Collection processed by NMAH Staff, 2003

Preferred Citation

Bennett Pottery Company Records, 1844-1881, Archives Center, National Museum of American History.

Restrictions

Collection is open for research.

Conditions Governing Use

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Biographical Note

Edwin Bennett, 1818 1908, was the founder of the Edwin Bennett Pottery Company, Baltimore, Maryland, which operated between 1846 and 1936

He was born in Newhall, Derbyshire, England, where he worked as a potter before coming to the United States in 1841 to join his brother, James Bennett, also a potter, in East Liverpool, Ohio.

In order to have access to the railroads, which at that time did not extend beyond the Alleghany Mountains, he decided to move east, first to Pittsburgh and then to Baltimore, Maryland where he built a factory in 1846.

Among the first wares produced were those for utilitarian purposes, such as pitchers, mugs, plates, spittoons, etc. These were primarily yellow wares, referred to by Bennett as "caneware". Mention is also made, and examples are extant, of Rockingham & ironstone wares. One popular model was a "Rebekah at the Well" teapot which was produced in 1851.

Bennett continued to experiment with clay bodies and glazes for many years as his notebooks indicate. The company's general line of merchandise expanded to include decorated porcelain tableware, parlor and banquet lamps, clock cases and other items. Bennett also hired skilled potters who produced artistic wares which were shown at various state exhibitions.

The company received awards from the Maryland Institute in 1854 and 1856, and later at the Philadelphia Centennial of 1876 and the Columbia Exposition of 1893.

Examples of Bennett pottery are in the collections of the Maryland Historical Society, the Philadelphia Museum of Art, the Metropolitan Museum of New York, and the Smithsonian Institution.

Two fires, one in 1864 and the other in 1906, destroyed many of the company's records, but advertisements and other materials that were salvaged, give evidence of the growth of the company. Along with its subsidiaries, it became one of the largest suppliers in the United States of hotel kitchen and tableware, chemical containers, public restroom fixtures and roofing tiles. Edwin Bennett was a charter member of the United States Potters Association having aided in its formation in 1875. In 1903 he was honored by the association as America's oldest living potter.

His son, Edwin Huston Bennett, became president of the company in 1890 but Bennett remained active in it until his death in 1908.

Scope and Contents

Early Bennett family histories, Edwin Bennett's autobiography, correspondence, 1914-1981, Bennett Pottery Company records, photographs, notebooks of clay and glaze formulae and other miscellaneous items, 1844-1981.

Scope and Contents

Includes 3 photographs related to the Baltimore fire, 1903-1905.

Arrangement

Divided into 8 series: (1) Biographical, (2) Correspondence, (3) Bennett Pottery Co., (4) Catalogs, advertisements, stationary, etc., (5) Photographs, (6) Notebooks of formulae and receipts, (7) Printed Material, (8) Ledgers of the Seven Clay Co. (a subsidiary of Bennett Pottery Company).

Names and Subject Terms

This collection is indexed in the online catalog of the Smithsonian Institution under the following terms:

Subjects:

Artisans
Ceramics manufacturing
Disasters
Fires -- Maryland -- Baltimore
Potters
Pottery

Types of Materials:

Business records -- 19th century
Photographs -- 1900-1950

Names:

Bennett, Edwin Huston
Bennett, James
National Museum of American History (U.S.). Division of Ceramics and Glass

Places:

Baltimore (Md.)

Container Listing

Series 1: Biographical

Box 1, Folder 1	Bennett Family History
Box 1, Folder 1	Autobiography of Edwin Bennett
Box 1, Folder 1	Monument to a Queen(Victoria Memorial Lot of the St. George's Society of Baltimore)
Box 1, Folder 2	Metsch, Christian & C. R. Boyce. Memories. East Liverpool, Ohio: First Methodist Episcopal Church, c. 1906. (reference to p. 101, Edwin Bennett)
Box 1, Folder 3	Citizenship papers, personal & family records and death announcements
	<p>Miscellaneous Notes: File includes notes about the Daniel Bennett memorial in the Central Methodist Church, Newhall; a postcard and lithograph of Pioneer Pottery, East Liverpool, Ohio; an envelope for Edwin Bennett's Roofing Tile Works; newspaper clipping about Edwin Bennett establishing Edwin Bennett Pottery; and an announcement of Severn Clay Company opening their Severn Ceramic Studios in Baltimore, Maryland.</p>

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

Series 2: Correspondence , 1914 1981

Scope and Contents: Letters to Mr. & Mrs. Edwin Bennett Filbert.

Box 1, Folder 4	Baltimore Museum of Art, 1941
Box 1, Folder 5	Bennett, Chester, 1963-1974
Box 1, Folder 6	Bennett, James 1967 (including a copy of Andrew Carnegie letter, March 11, 1858), & response from Edwin Bennett Filbert, 1967
Box 1, Folder 6	Maryland Historical Society, 1954-1974
Box 1, Folder 6	Miscellaneous, 1973
Box 1, Folder 7	Pennsylvania Museum, 1914-1941
Box 1, Folder 7	Philadelphia Museum of Art, 1941
Box 1, Folder 8	Smithsonian Institution, 1958-1981
Box 1, Folder 9	Winterthur (Henry Frances DuPont) Museum, 1958-1966
Box 2, Folder 9	Correspondence, 1887, 1892, 1897, 1904, 1906

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

Series 3: Bennet Pottery Company

Box 2, Folder 1	Resolution to erect factory, 1847
Box 2, Folder 1	Amount of stock, 1851-1854
Box 2, Folder 1	Names of customers, 1853
Box 2, Folder 1	Cancelled checks
Box 2, Folder 1	Patent for Fruit Jar, 1869
Box 2, Folder 1	Right to use & make Hicks cement, 1879
Box 2, Folder 1	Columbia Exposition Award, 1893
Box 2, Folder 1	Floor plan (of kiln)
Box 2, Folder 1	Exhibit cards, 1875, 1890-1900
Box 2, Folder 2	Edwin Huston Bennett, (son of Edwin Bennett) stock shares, "memorandums," and photographs
Box 2, Folder 2	Names of some of the Men & Women who worked at Edwin Bennett Pottery Co., 1908 1927
Box 2, Folder 3	Gillinder & Bennett, 1867-(?)
Box 2, Folder 3	Lease (copy), December 1867
Box 2, Folder 3	Letter to Martha Gillinder, July 1868
Box 2, Folder 3	Newspaper clippings
Box 2, Folder 3	Correspondence of Emma Masland to Mrs. Edwin Bennett Filbert
Box 2, Folder 3	Two Stereo cards of factory
Box 2, Folder 4	Haynes, Bennett Co.,, 1890-1893
Box 2, Folder 5	Factory Fire letter announcing fire & planned re building,, Feb. 3, 1910,
Box 2, Folder 6	Correspondence to: "Glass & Lamps" (trade journal), Aug. 26, 1921
Box 2, Folder 6	Correspondence from:R. T. Vanderbilt Co. re:, June 1925

Box 2, Folder 6	American Clays, article reprinted from Journal of American Ceramic Society
Box 2, Folder 7-8	Notes by Mrs. Edwin Bennett Filbert
Box 2, Folder 10	Notes by Mrs. Edwin Bennett Filbert
Box 2, Folder 11	Edwin Benett Filbert [account book for customers], 1934
Box 2, Folder 12	Kenneth M. Smith [account book for customers], 1934

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

Series 4: Catalogues, Advertisements, and Stationery

Box 3, Folder 1	Price lists, catalogues and advertisements:
Box 3, Folder 1	Bennett Pottery Co.
Box 3, Folder 1	Chesapeake Pottery Co.
Box 3, Folder 1	Haynes, Bennett & Co.
Box 3, Folder 2	Illustrations of Artistic Wares, mfg. by Edwin Bennett, Balt., MD.
Box 3, Folder 3	Stationery, steel engraving & post cards of factory; plate for engraving & card
Box 3, Folder 4	Newspaper, magazine articles

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

Series 5: Photographs

Box 3, Folder 5	Bennett Pottery wares
Box 3, Folder 6	Edwin Bennett, Edwin Huston Bennett (son), house, employees & factory

Baltimore, Md. [panoramic photoprints], 1903-1905

3 Items (photoprints, folder; approx. 8 x 35 in., in 1)

Map-folder 1

Image(s)

Photographer: Schaefer, J. W.
Language: English.
Restrictions: Unrestricted research use on site, by appointment. Must be handled with gloves, unless protected by plastic sleeves.
Scope and Contents: Panoramas, imprinted "J. W. Schaefer, Balto, Md.," one with date 1903, one 1904, and the third dated 1905. 1903 and 1904 taken from same view-showing the city before and after the fire.
Topic: Fires -- Maryland -- Baltimore
Place: Baltimore (Md.) -- 1900-1910
Genre/Form: Photographs -- 1900-1950
Panoramic photographs -- 1900-1910.

Box 2, Folder 13

Photographs of pottery equipment and pottery being made, undated

Notes: Includes black and white * (in x 10 in) photographs and two pages from a smaller photograph album.

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

Series 6: Notebooks of Formulae and Receipts

Box 4, Folder 1	Daybook, 1853 and "Memorandum of trials of Glazes & Bodies," 1853-1862
Box 4, Folder 1	Glaze formulas,, 1862
Box 4, Folder 1	Formulas, expenses and orders, 1864
Box 4, Folder 1	Formulas, 1866 1868
Box 4, Folder 1	Formulas (loose pages)
Box 4, Folder 1	Clays, 1866
Box 4, Folder 1	Book of Experiments Edwin Bennett, Baltimore, 1876
Box 4, Folder 2	(Photo copies of above)
Box 5, Folder 1	Formulas, 1872-1906
Box 5, Folder 2	Formulas, 1896-1935
Box 2, Folder 10	Edwin Bennett Filbert Formula Book and loose notes, undated

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

Series 7: Printed Material

Subseries 7.1: Books re: Pottery and Glass

Box 6, Folder 1	Matthew Brown, his Book Potter, Durham, England, undated
Box 6, Folder 1	John Shirley, Receipts for Potting, Enamelling, Glass Staining & Painting Philadelphia, 1845
Box 6, Folder 2	Wm. Evans, Art and History of the Potting Business, 1846
Box 6, Folder 2	John Taylor, The Complete Practical Potter, 1847
Box 6, Folder 3	Apsley Pellett, Curiosities of Glass Making, 1848
Box 6, Folder 3	Philip Pointon's Receipt Book for the Manufacture of Pottery Ware, August 1869 to May 1871
Box 6, Folder 4	W. R. Creyke, Book of Receipts for Enamel, Underglaze & Majolica, 1884
Box 6, Folder 4	Untitled Table of chemical elements, potencies, receipts
Box 6, Folder 4	Arthur S. Watts. Note on cobalt stain in White Ware Bodies, undated

Subseries 7.2: Periodicals and Other Materials

Box 6, Folder 5	Maryland Historical Societies
Box 6, Folder 6	Bulletin of the Pennsylvania Museum, April 1914
Box 7, Folder 1	Baltimore & Its Industrial Development 1882, and Baltimore Souvenir Map, 1894
Box 7, Folder 2	United States Potters Association, December 8, 1908, Dec. 1, 1903 and Wage Scale and Size List Agreement, May 1931
Box 7, Folder 3	Pottery and Glassware Reporter,, October 8, 1891
Box 7, Folder 4	Crockery and Glass Journal, January 27, 1898
Box 7, Folder 5	The China, Glass & Pottery Review, April 1898
Box 7, Folder 6	Glass and Pottery World, June 20, 1905
Box 7, Folder 7	China, Glass & Lamps, September 5, 1921

Box 7, Folder 7	Ceramic Industry, October 1935
Box 7, Folder 7	Minerals Yearbook (Clays, chapter reprint), 1941
Box 7, Folder 7	Miscellaneous
Map-folder 2	The Art Portfolio of the International Studio (cover only) , undated

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

Series 8: Ledgers of the Severn Clay Company. (Subsidiary of Bennet Pottery Company)

Box 8, Folder Unknown	Cash Book #1, 12/18/33-05/09/40
Box 8, Folder Unknown	Cash Book#2, 05/08/40-10/30/43
Box 8, Folder Unknown	Cash Book#3, 11/01/43-12/30/47
Box 9, Folder Unknown	Sales Book #1, February 1934 to 23 April 1940
Box 9, Folder Unknown	Sales Book #2, 1 April 1940 to 30 March 1943
Box 9, Folder Unknown	Sales Book #3, 1 April 1943 to 31 March 1943
Box 9, Folder Unknown	Sales Book #4, 1 April 1947 to 29 June 1951

[Return to Table of Contents](#)