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**John Van Wicheren Reynders (1866-1944)
Papers, 1923-1927**



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Biographical Note

John Van Wicheren Reynders was born December 17, 1866 in Hoboken, New Jersey. Reynders received a degree in civil engineering from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in 1886. An honorary doctorate in engineering was conferred on him by the Institute in 1925. He began his professional work in the manufacture of steel in Pittsburgh, PA. From 1892 to 1906 he managed the Pennsylvania Steel Company in Steelton, PA and was its vice president from 1906 to 1916. He was actively engaged in bridge building for this company which under his management built the steel railway arch bridge over the Niagara River; the Gokteik Viaduct in Burma, India; the Queensboro Bridge over the Mississippi River; and many other notable projects. As a resident of Harrisburg, PA, he took much interest in city affairs and was responsible for many civic improvements. In 1916, when Bethlehem Steel bought out Pennsylvania Steel, Reynders moved to New York and established himself as a consultant on steel properties. He was a member of

the American Institute of Mining and Metallurgical Engineers for more than thirty years, serving on its board of directors and as president from 1925 to 1926. Reynders was a delegate to the Republican National Convention in 1908. He organized a committee of engineers to support Herbert Hoover's candidacy for president of the United States. John V. W. Reynders married Clare Charlton of Harrisburg in 1894 and they had three children. He died July 10, 1944 in New York, NY.

Scope and Content: Reports produced by John V. W. Reynders as consultant to steel production companies make up this small collection of professional papers dating from 1921 to 1928. Also included in this collection is a photo album documenting the construction of the Bear Mountain Bridge across the Hudson River.

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Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, 110 8th St. Troy, NY 12180-3590

REYNDERS, J. V. W., superintendent of the bridge and construction department, Pennsylvania Steel Company, was born in Hoboken, N. J., December 17, 1866. He is a son of John and Louise (Sellers) Reynders, and was educated at the Gymnasium at Wesel, Germany, and at the Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, Troy, N. Y., where he was graduated in civil engineering. In 1886 he engaged with the Pittsburgh Bridge Company as designer and remained with the company two years. He was next employed at the Snead & Co. Iron Works, Louisville, Ky., and later by the Penn Bridge Company, Beaver Falls, Pa. After this he engaged as assistant on the construction of the Cairo bridge across the Ohio river, the St. Louis merchants' bridge across the Mississippi, and other important structures; being stationed at this period at the Union Bridge Company's Works, Buffalo, N. Y., and Athens, Pa., and at the Edgemoor Bridge Works, Wilmington, Del. In December, 1890, at the organization of the bridge and construction department of the Pennsylvania Steel Company, Steelton, he was appointed to the position of engineer and in the spring of 1891 was placed in charge of the department. Some of the notable structures erected by the Pennsylvania Steel Company under his supervision include the steel arch span across the Niagara, replacing the old railway suspension bridge; a double track bridge across the harbor of Duluth, Minn., including one of the heaviest draw spans in existence; the Lake Roland elevated railway, running through the heart of Baltimore, and a bridge across the Norwalk river at South Norwalk, Conn., including the first four track draw span built in this country.

Mr. Reynders was married, in 1894, to Miss Clare, daughter of Dr. S. T. Charlton, of Harrisburg. They have one child, J. V. W. Reynders, Jr. Mr. and Mrs. Reynders are members of the Pine street Presbyterian church, Harrisburg. His politics are independent. He is a member of the American Society of Civil Engineers, the Engineers' Club, of Philadelphia, and the Harrisburg Club.

Historical Review of Dauphin County

Transcribed by Robert Demy rdemy@earthlink.net for The Dauphin County,
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