

**New York Public Library
Humanities and Social Sciences Library
Manuscripts and Archives Division**

**William Barclay Parsons
Papers, 1880-1939**
MssCol 2346

Biographical Note

William Barclay Parsons (1859-1932) was an American civil engineer. He received A.B. (1879) and C.E. (1882) degrees from Columbia University. Parsons was associated with the Rapid Transit System of New York, made a survey of Chinese railroads, 1898-1899, was on the Board of consulting engineers for the Panama Canal, 1905, and was Chief engineer for the Cape Cod Canal, 1905-1914. He served in both the Spanish-American War and World War I. He authored numerous works on engineering and railroads. Parsons served on the Board of Trustees of The New York Public Library from 1911-1932.

Scope and Content Note

The bulk of the papers document the research and composition of Parsons' book *Engineers and Engineering in the Renaissance*, published posthumously in 1939. This material includes transcripts, photostats, notes, correspondence, maps, illustrations, typescripts and page proofs. There is also one folder of correspondence, 1881-1900, relating to his student days at the Columbia University School of Mines, appointments to various railroads, and activity as Columbia trustee. The papers also include Parson's notes on lectures about mining at Columbia, 1880-1881, illustrated with drawings and plates.

Records documenting Parsons' tenure on the Board of Trustees of The New York Public Library are included in several collections of records held by the NYPL Archives. For further information consult the NYPL Archivist.

Container List

| <u>Box</u> | <u>Contents</u> |
|------------|--|
| 1-10 | Transcripts, photostats, notes, correspondence and other materials used by Parsons during research for his book <i>Engineers and Engineering in the Renaissance</i> |
| 11 | Drawings, maps and plans used by Parsons during research for his book <i>Engineers and Engineering in the Renaissance</i> |
| 12 | Illustrations used by Parsons during research for his book <i>Engineers and Engineering in the Renaissance</i> |
| 13 | Books and pamphlets used by Parsons during research for his book <i>Engineers and Engineering in the Renaissance</i> |
| 14 | Notebooks and bibliographic materials used by Parsons during research for his book <i>Engineers and Engineering in the Renaissance</i> |
| 15-16 | Typescript of <i>Engineers and Engineering in the Renaissance</i> |
| 17 | Page proofs of <i>Engineers and Engineering in the Renaissance</i> |
| 18 | Notes on lectures on mining by Prof. H.S. Munroe, Columbia University, 1880-1881, illustrated with drawings and plates |
| 18 | Correspondence, 1881-1900, relating to his student days at the Columbia University School of Mines, appointments to various railroads, and activity as Columbia trustee. |