

**HISTORY OF THE
RENSSELAER
POLYTECHNIC
INSTITUTE, 1824-1894**

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History of the Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, 1824-1894 by Palmer C. Ricketts

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PALMER C. RICKETTS

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Observatory.

Ranken House.

Laboratory,  Main Building.
RENSSELAER POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE. 1894.

Gymnasium.

HISTORY
OF THE
RENSSELAER POLYTECHNIC
INSTITUTE

1824—1894

BY
PALMER C. RICKETTS



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TO THE MEMORY
OF
Stephen Van Rensselaer
AND
Amos Eaton.

101603

PREFACE.

HAVING recently been compelled to write several brief historical sketches of the Institute the writer became interested in its early history. In preparing these narratives he found the official publications giving the characteristics of the School at the time of its foundation to have become very rare. In fact, very few of them antedating 1840 are known to be in existence. For these reasons he determined to expand the sketches and publish a short history of the Institution which should consist largely of a description of the development of its curriculum.

The student of the history of education will recognize the importance of an account of the early methods of instruction pursued in an institution which was, at once, the first School of Science and the first School of Civil Engineering to be established in any English-speaking country, and if the conceded originality of these methods be also considered it is believed that no excuse for the appearance of this somewhat condensed narrative will be thought necessary.

Interesting information has been obtained from

the recently discovered original minutes of the board of trustees for the twenty-five years immediately following the founding of the School, which were believed to have been destroyed in the fire of 1862, and the thanks of the writer are due the President and Secretary of the present board for placing at his disposal the minutes covering the period from 1862 until the present time.

The author is also under obligation to Professor Henry B. Nason for the loan of a number of the early circulars, to A. J. Weise, Esq., for the picture of the Van Der Heyden mansion ; to James Irving, Esq., for that of the building on the Infant School Lot, and to Professor William G. Raymond for the two photographs from which the pictures showing railroad and hydrographic work of students were taken. The Bibliography at the end of the last chapter shows other sources whence information has been obtained.

P. C. R.

RENSSELAER POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE,
TROY, N. Y., January 1, 1895.