

Bethinking of Old Orleans

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LYNN M. BURROWS 1884-1944

*"Since what we choose is what we are,
And what we love we yet shall be,
The goal may ever shine a-far —
The will to win it makes us free."*

William DeWitt Hyde

Lynn Moore Burrows was born in Saginaw, Mich., June 17, 1884. He was the son of Lorenzo and Julia Louise (Moore) Burrows. His family had recently moved to Saginaw, but they returned to Albion, Orleans County, N.Y., shortly thereafter, where they lived the remainder of their lives.

The Burrows family came from Connecticut to western New York in 1824. Their activities in political, financial, commercial and civic life had much to do with the development of western New York.

Mr. Burrows received his early education in private schools, and later attended Rensselaer Polytechnical Institute, Troy, N.Y., from which he was graduated in 1907 with the degree of Civil Engineer. Immediately thereafter he took charge of sewer construction for the Village of Medina, N.Y. At the time, the State of New York had just begun to enlarge the Erie Canal into what became known as the New York State Barge Canal. This project was to employ many new methods of construction which brought out the ingenuity and talents of the engineering profession. Mr. Burrows started work during the year following his graduation as assistant engineer in charge of construction of one of the large sections of the Barge Canal. This had a broadening influence on his engineering life, which was later very valuable to him. During this period, he was in close contact with many men and many problems connected with this large project, as it was then considered. By nature he was a little reticent, and not blustering. He knew how to make friends and to get along with his peers, and this brought him very successful results.

Likewise, after the years on the Barge Canal project that so broadened Mr. Burrows' outlook in engineering matters, he applied his talents to the development and opening of large areas of rich virgin lands for intensive agricultural use. These large areas amounted to a little less than fifteen square miles and were the remains of prehistoric swamps, referred to as muck lands. To prepare these areas for cultivation required the application of well-balanced engineering talent, since drainage of the land produced many problems.

Mr. Burrows was particularly tactful in straightening out ownership of the land in this general area. The region concerned reached from the north state line of Pennsylvania to the shore of Lake Ontario and from the Niagara frontier on the Niagara River eastward to the "Genesee Country". In general, the region had been surveyed in the latter part of the eighteenth century, following out "The Hundred-Thousand Acre Tract," "The Connecticut Tract," and similar grants. The original notes of these different portions had not been properly preserved in many cases, and some had been kept with meticulous care. Many of them, when placed together and studied, made it possible to map the entire territory. By deep analysis and the diligent application of the true spirit and resourcefulness of the engineer, it was possible to bring this land into proper juxtaposition, but strict application and painstaking tramping over the area were necessary. Although Mr. Burrows did not have direct responsibility, he gave his ideas and counsel which aided materially in finding the right answer.

Consequently Mr. Burrows spent considerable time and effort in land surveying, engineering and drainage, from April 1909 to December, 1924. He was greatly interested in the design and construction of, and the surveying for, water distribution, sewer systems, and drainage — to which he gave his close attention for fifteen years. During this period he worked in partnership with others, but the various projects with which he was concerned were completed largely by his own efforts.

Mr. Burrows' forefathers foresaw the possible



future value of the region in which they lived. One result of this background was the spanning by means of bridges, the Niagara River Gorge along the International Boundary Line between the United States and Canada. Such bridges were primarily for railroad traffic, but were designed for combination uses to include vehicular and pedestrian traffic as well. As greater demands were made, these facilities had to be increased and revised, and Mr. Burrows was given charge of designing the improvement of the approaches to the Niagara Railway Arch Bridge at Niagara Falls, N.Y.

About this time he became a director of the Niagara Falls International Bridge Company at Niagara Falls, but still resided at Albion. Also, during this period, greater demands were made on Mr. Burrows, as he had considerable versatility and aptitude; and, when called upon, he undertook the work of designing and supervising the construction of the sewer extension and disposal of factory wastes for the Village of Albion. Concurrently, he made surveys for subdivisions of property for city planning in the greater region of western New York.

In addition to his duties connected with the office of director, he was chosen as president of the Niagara Falls International Bridge Company and filled that position with honor and success, although part of that time illness interfered somewhat with his activities.

Mr. Burrows was a likeable man, quiet and unassuming. An ardent yachtsman, his love for yachting was a great help in maintaining health and spirits, and he took delight in annual cruises in his yachts. He was the first commodore and organizer of the Oak Orchard Yacht Club. Mr. Burrows was a member of the Rensselaer Society of Engineers; the Officers Reserve Corps (Captain of Engineers); the University Club of Rochester; the Rochester Yacht Club; the Town Club of Albion; Renovation Lodge, Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks at Albion; American Red Cross (treasurer of the local chapter); the Board of Commissioners of Mt. Albion Cemetery (treasurer); Albion Chapter of Rotary; and the Board of Directors of Arnold Gregory Memorial Hospital at Albion. He was a Republican and belonged to the Christ Episcopal Church at Albion.

On July 24, 1907, Mr. Burrows was married to Beatrice Signor of Albion.

The above information was prepared by Schuyler Hazard for a leaflet published by the American Society of Civil Engineers as a memorial to Lynn Moore Burrows.