

Hope College

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**H89-1041. Vennema, John (1871-1960). Papers, 1901-1961. 0.25 linear ft.**

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**H89-1041.** Vennema, John (1871-1960).  
Papers, 1901-1961. 0.25 linear ft.

### Abstract

Attended Hope Preparatory School (1888-1889), Hope College (1889-1891); non-career Consul-General of the Netherlands in Chicago (1914-1940); honored with a special convocation by Hope College in 1928 and later received an honorary L.L.D. in 1930; spent time as a lawyer and pharmacist in the Chicago, Illinois, and Menominee, Michigan, areas. Collection contains biographical material, correspondence from correspondents in the Netherlands and the United States, speeches, clippings and programs of events attended by and given in honor of Vennema, and photographs and business cards of his international and professional associates.

Accession No: H89-1041  
Provenance: John Vennema I  
Donor: John Vennema II  
Photographs: 3 images  
Processed by: Geoffrey D. Reynolds, March 1998

### Biography

John (Johannes) Vennema I was born October 2, 1871, in Holland, Michigan, to Ame W. Vennema and Johanna Jozina De Swarte. He was the first son of Ame's second marriage. After attending Hope College Preparatory School during the 1888-1889 school year, and Hope College from 1889-1891, he graduated from the Chicago Kent College of Law in 1895. Before attending law school, Vennema operated a pharmacy in Menominee, Michigan.

He was a member of the Chicago law firm of Harris, Vennema & Bird from 1904-1909, and Hyde, Vennema & Bird in 1909. He was with that firm until setting out on his own in 1914. John and Sybell S. Meyers were married in Sheridan Park, Illinois, on October 22, 1902. In 1904, he became a director of Presto Publishing Company upon its organization, as well as serving as a term on the board of directors for the Henry Bosch Company. From 1909-1919, he served as the city attorney of Kenilworth, Illinois.

Queen Wilhelmina of the Netherlands appointed Vennema non-career Consul-General of the Netherlands in Chicago in 1914, succeeding George Birkhoff, Jr. The post covered the states of Illinois, Wisconsin, Nebraska, North and South Dakota, Idaho, Wyoming, and Montana. This title was distinct because of his American birth. He continued in this position until 1941. During this time, he was made an officer of the Oak Crown (Luxembourg) and the Order of Orange-Nassau (Holland), both in 1920. He was honored by Hope College with a special convocation in 1928 and later bestowed upon him the honorary degree of L.L.D. in 1930.

Vennema's other appointments included president of the Holland Society and the Congregational Union Club, Affiliated Germanic Group of the City of Chicago, Union League, Hamilton, downtown Rotary and Kenilworth Clubs, and the Episcopalian Mason (32nd degree), all of Chicago. He was also a member of the Marquette Range Engineers.

Sybell died in July 1939 after a lengthy illness in Winnetka, Illinois. He returned to Kenilworth from Winnetka to live with his daughter that same year. Vennema married his second wife, Fannie Somerville Maitland of Negaunee, Michigan, in January of 1941.

John Vennema died April 16, 1960 in Evanston, Illinois.

Scope and Content

The collection contains biographical material in the form of newspaper clippings, correspondence from individuals in the Netherlands and the United States, original transcripts of speeches given, clippings and programs of events attended by and given in honor of Vennema, and photographs and business cards of his international and professional associates. The collections is arranged in alphabetical order.

Container List

Biographical

Business/Membership Cards and Directories, 1902-1940

Ame Vennema I, n.d.

Dr. Ame Vennema II, 1925

Marcelle Dorothy Vennema, n.d, 1902

John Vennema I, 1902-1940

John Vennema II, n.d.

Sybell Vennema (Mrs. John Vennema I), 1907

Business Cards of Associates, n.d.

Correspondence

Netherlands to John Vennema, 1926-1935

Various to John Vennema, 1902-1961

Events

Attended by John Vennema, 1901-1947

Honoring John Vennema, 1939

Hope College Honorary Degree, 1930

Hope College Special Convocation, 1928

Photographs, n.d. (3 images)

Scrapbook (photocopied)

Speeches Given by John Vennema, n.d., 1924-1927

Tochiana, Henry A. van Coenen, 1938