

Crossing the Connecticut

*An account of the various
Public Crossings of the Con-
necticut River at Hartford
since the earliest times,
together with a full de-
scription of*

Hartford Bridge

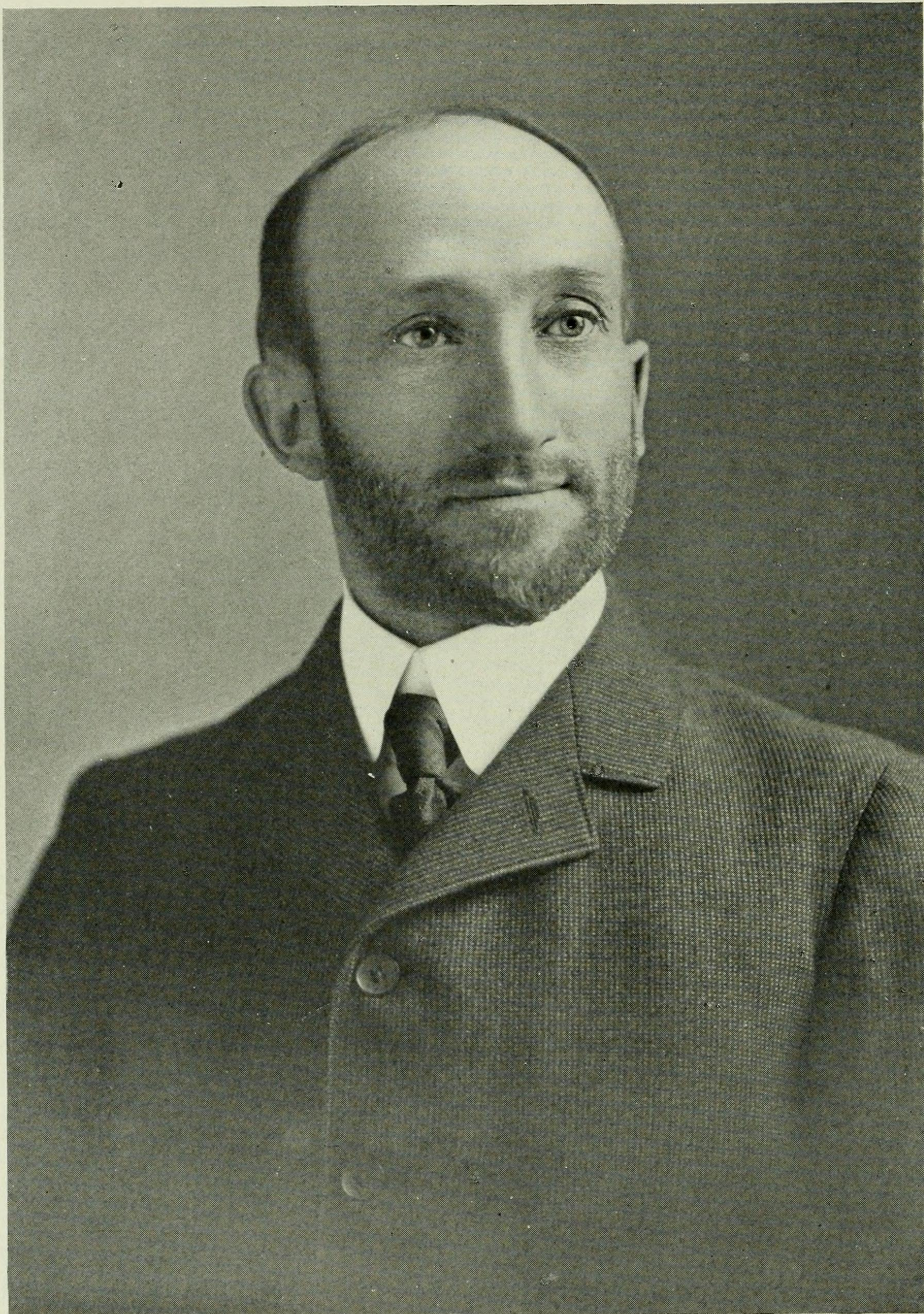
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half-tone reproductions*

*By GEORGE E. WRIGHT
Author, Proprietor and Publisher*



*HARTFORD, CONN.
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1908*

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EDWIN DWIGHT GRAVES.
Chief Engineer of the Connecticut River Bridge and Highway District.

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EDWIN DWIGHT GRAVES

[Hartford Times, Nov. 29, 1907.]

WHEN the great stone bridge across the Connecticut River is seen by the proud citizens of the state, they will do well to remember that the beauty and symmetry of the great structure is in a large measure due to the ability of Edwin Dwight Graves, who, until ill health necessitated his retirement, was the chief engineer for the Bridge Commission. It was Mr. Graves who prepared the first plans for the bridge as it has been built. Unfortunately his mind gave way under the strain, and he never will be able to appreciate the completion of the great work.

"Edwin Dwight Graves was born October 5, 1865, at Orono, Me., the son of Perez and Abbie Colburn Graves. He was a descendant of Thomas Graves, who settled in Hartford in 1645, and who died in 1662 at Hatfield, Mass., to which town he had removed the year before. Isaac, the oldest son of Thomas, from whom Edwin D. Graves was descended, was one of the prominent men of Hatfield, and was killed in the Indian attack on the settlement, September 19, 1677.

"Mr. Graves was educated in the public schools of Orono, and then took a course in civil engineering at the University of Maine, which is located at Orono, from which institution he was graduated in 1886. He then began work in railroad construction in his native state, and became chief engineer of the Somerset Railroad the same year. He held that office until 1890, and late that year moved to Connecticut, where his ancestors had lived almost 250 years earlier. After coming to Connecticut, Mr. Graves devoted himself to the specialty of bridge building, and designed the bridge crossing the Connecticut River at Thompsonville; and he also designed and built the bridge over the Connecticut at Middletown, which is said to have the longest draw span operated by electricity in the country. He also built a bridge crossing the Connecticut River at White River Junction, Vt. He had charge of the construction of many steel frame buildings in New York.

"On October 6, 1890, Mr. Graves married Maybelle Parlin, daughter of the late J. J. and Sarah B. Parlin of North Anson, Me., and he has two children, Margaret E. and Justin D. Graves. Mr. Graves is a member of the American Society of Civil Engineers, and of the Connecticut Society of Civil Engineers, of which he has been president. He was also a member of the Engineers' Club of New York, the Engineers' Club of Philadelphia, the In-

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ternational Association for Testing Materials, the Hartford Club, the Republican Club, The Hartford Golf Club, the Beta Theta Pi college fraternity and the Connecticut Commandery, Military Order of Foreign Wars."

He came to Hartford from Middletown in 1896, after the burning of the old wooden bridge, May 17, 1895. He planned all the East Hartford causeway work and the approaches to the bridge on the west side, besides the bridge itself, and the whole undertaking required a great deal of foresight and an immense amount of work, under the great strain of which his mind gave way in January, 1906, since which time he has been completely incapacitated.

Men of Mark in Connecticut

IDEALS OF AMERICAN LIFE TOLD IN BIOG-
RAPHIES AND AUTOBIOGRAPHIES OF
EMINENT LIVING AMERICANS

EDITED BY

COLONEL N. G. OSBORN

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EDWIN DWIGHT GRAVES

GRAVES, EDWIN DWIGHT, civil engineer, is a descendant of one of Hartford's oldest families, the members of which removed to Massachusetts and then to Maine, and now Mr. Graves is back in the place of their first settlement in America, doing good work, as they did two hundred and fifty years ago. The Graves family in England is among the most ancient, and members of it have held high places of honor and distinction. The first to come to this country was Thomas Graves, accompanied by four sons and one daughter, all adults.

The family located in Hartford and in Wethersfield prior to 1645, and it is quite worthy of note that they were engaged in surveying and general engineering work. Never could they have dreamed, however, of the tremendous engineering project which would be under the charge of their descendant in this identical township in 1906. Thomas Graves was a man of rather unyielding convictions. He had come to America for conscience's sake and he could not here compromise with anything which did not meet his ideas of propriety. After a few years there occurred a schism in Thomas Hooker's First Church of Christ (the first in Connecticut), with infant baptism as the cause of it. The Graves family could not accept what they believed to be the ungodly latitude that was developing in the local church. Accordingly, in 1661, all except one son, Nathan, packed their goods on ox-carts, abandoned their houses and lands, and marched to Hatfield, Massachusetts, where they were prominent for many years thereafter. Isaac, son of Thomas, and direct ancestor of Edwin D. Graves, was killed by the Indians, together with his brother, John, in an attack made on Hatfield September 19th, 1677. After the slaughter of Deerfield people, two years before, the Graves' and other families of Hatfield had surrounded their settlement with a stockade, but on this eventful September day Isaac and John had gone outside the stockade to work upon a new house. Eight others were killed in this attack.

Descendants of the family removed to Belchertown, Massachusetts, and then to Maine, where, in the village of Orono, Mr. Graves was born on October 5th, 1865. One of his ancestors, Joseph, was a lieutenant in the army during the Revolutionary War. Mr. Graves' father was Perez Boardman Graves, a carpenter, and his mother was Abbey M. (Colbourn) Graves, who exerted a strong influence on the mental and moral development of her two sons. Plain, homely, country life promoted at one and the same time the boy's physical constitution and his knowledge of what work meant and of how to overcome obstacles. Patiently he pursued the course he had chosen for himself till, working his own way, he had graduated from the University of Maine with the class of 1886 and could see his way clear for the profession of civil engineering. In 1884, two years before graduation, he had tried his hand at it, on railroad surveys, and with results that encouraged him. After graduation he continued his studies as a member of the American Society of Civil Engineers.

Some of his more important work has been the surveying for the Canadian Pacific Railway from Moosehead Lake, Mattawamkeag, as engineer of the Somerset Railway Company, and as engineer for the Berlin Iron Bridge Company of East Berlin, Connecticut, whose wonderful engineering achievements brought it world-wide fame. When the great problem of bridging the Connecticut River at Hartford confronted the public, after the burning of the century-old wooden bridge in 1895, a combination of towns directly affected was formed under the title of the Connecticut River Bridge & Highway District, with power from the Legislature. There was no other bridge for general traffic between Middletown and Springfield, Massachusetts, and all the great tide of business between east and west in Northern Connecticut, except by steam road, must be over the proposed structure. The questions which arose were troublesome and the importance of securing a thoroughly competent engineer first of all was apparent to the commission acting for the district, of which ex-Governor Morgan G. Bulkeley was chairman. If there could be surety that the bridge would be what it should be, the funds would be readily forthcoming. Mr. Graves was chosen for the responsible position. Under his direction the largest stone arch bridge in the world is nearing completion, and in addition a boulevard on the Hartford side, the construction of which involved the removal of blocks of houses and

the regrading of streets and railways in a densely settled part of the city. The cost of the bridge and the Hartford approach will be not less than \$3,700,000.00. It is the greatest piece of engineering ever undertaken in Connecticut and it excites the admiration of the many experts from all parts of America and Europe who came here to see it.

Mr. Graves is a Republican in politics and is a member of that old First Church of Christ to which his ancestors belonged. He is fond of golfing and of country and seaside recreation and a firm believer in systematic physical culture. He is a member of the college fraternity of Beta Theta Pi (Beta Eta Chapter), of the Engineers' Club of New York City, of the Hartford Club, the Hartford Golf Club, the Republican Club of Hartford, and of the Hartford Board of Trade.

He married Maybelle Parlin of North Anson, Maine, on October 5th, 1890. They have two children. Their home is at No. 75 North Beacon street, Hartford.