

NEW YORK STATE'S
PROMINENT
AND PROGRESSIVE MEN

AN ENCYCLOPÆDIA OF CONTEMPORANEOUS
BIOGRAPHY

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ALFRED P. BOLLER

ALFRID PANCOAST BOLLER comes of German ancestry on the paternal side and of English ancestry on the maternal side. His father, Henry J. Boller, was a man of moderate circumstances, living a life of retirement from business cares. His mother's maiden name was Anna M. Pancoast, which identifies her with one of the best-known families of Philadelphia. To this couple the subject of this sketch was born, in the city of Philadelphia, on February 23, 1840. He enjoyed the best educational and social privileges obtainable. His regular collegiate course was pursued at the University of Pennsylvania, from which, in 1858, he received the degree of A. M. Thence, his inclination being toward engineering as a profession, he went to the well-known Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, at Troy, New York, and was there graduated, in 1861, with the degree of C. E.

After leaving the Rensselaer Institute he engaged actively in his profession, commencing as rodman on the Nesquehoning Valley Railroad, and becoming eventually an assistant engineer and topographer, in which latter capacity he made an elaborate topographical map of the middle and southern anthracite coal-fields, with their various outlets to market. In June, 1862, he was detailed as an assistant on the repairs of the Lehigh Canal, which had been damaged almost to obliteration by the great freshet of that month. In the spring of 1863 he entered the service of the Philadelphia and Erie Railroad, which had just been leased by the Pennsylvania Railroad, and, attached to the staff of the general manager, attended to various miscellaneous duties to which he was detailed. In 1865 he became engineer of bridges on the Atlantic and Great Western Railroad, planning the International Bridge over the Niagara River at Black Rock



Alf. P. Bolles

and the Cattaraugus Viaduct — works never carried out because of the collapse of the railroad company in the same year.

In the fall of 1865 he entered the service of the Hudson River Railroad as chief engineer, which place he resigned to go into the iron business with Samuel Milliken (Milliken & Boller) as agents of the Phoenix Iron Company in New York and England. In 1870 he became vice-president and engineer of the Phillipsburg Manufacturing Company, which lasted until the panic of 1873. During the existence of that company numerous railroad and highway bridges were built by Mr. Boller.

Since the failure of that concern, Mr. Boller has been practising as engineer and contractor up to the present time, with his office for over twenty-five years at 71 Broadway, New York. During this time he has been engaged on much miscellaneous work: as consulting engineer of the Zaza Railroad, Cuba; of the Port au Prince (horse) Railroad, Haiti; as chief engineer of the Manhattan Elevated Railroad, New York; as chief engineer of the West Side and Yonkers Railroad (from One Hundred and Fifty-fifth Street, New York, to High Bridge, and covering the bridge over the Harlem River at Eighth Avenue); as contracting engineer for structural work on the New York and Putnam Railroad; as contractor (Boller & Drake) for building the Bergen County branch of the Erie Railroad; as consulting engineer for the Department of Public Parks, New York, for bridging the Bronx River at several points, and for the superstructure of the Madison Avenue Bridge; as chief engineer of the Staten Island Rapid Transit Road, including the tunnel under the United States Lighthouse grounds, and St. George Ferry development. He formed the contracting firm of Boller & McGaw, which built the twin gas-holder tanks (one hundred and fifty feet in diameter) for the Bay State Gas Company, Boston; a tank for the Staten Island Gas Light Company; the Metropolitan Avenue Bridge over Newtown Creek, Brooklyn, New York; the concrete base foundation block (twelve thousand cubic yards) for the Bartholdi statue pedestal; and the foundation and masonry substructure for various bridges on the Pennsylvania Railroad; planned and built the Arthur Kill Bridge, for the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad, and was one of the syndicate for building the Kansas, Nebraska, and Dakota Railroad.

In 1887 he was appointed chief engineer for building the bridge and approaches over the Thames River, at New London, on the Shore Line route to Boston, which was opened in the fall of 1889—one of the most difficult engineering works ever undertaken. He was an expert commissioner for harmonizing the railroad interests centering at Providence, Rhode Island, and for planning a joint terminal system for that city. After the completion of the above works he served as designing and supervising engineer in building the One Hundred and Fifty-fifth Street Viaduct and Central Bridge over the Harlem River, with approaches thereto, for the city of New York, involving an expenditure of nearly two million dollars, and also the Harlem Ship Canal Bridge, Kingsbridge Road, in which Professor W. H. Burr was associated with him.

Mr. Boller was consulting engineer of the Findlay, Fort Wayne and Western Railroad, the Cape Cod Ship Canal project, the Sault Ste. Marie power development, and various other enterprises and interests; consulting engineer to the city of Newark for the track elevations of the Pennsylvania and New Jersey Central railroads; chief engineer of the great four-track railroad and highway bridge between Duluth and West Superior, completed in the summer of 1897; and consulting engineer to the city of New York on important structural work in the Twenty-third Ward. In 1899 he was consulting engineer for the building of the Melrose Avenue Viaduct in the borough of the Bronx, and of the Ninety-sixth Street Viaduct for Riverside Drive, in the borough of Manhattan.

As an author, Mr. Boller has written a work on bridge-building, and has contributed to the technical papers. He is a member of the American Society of Civil Engineers, the Institution of Civil Engineers, London, the American Institution of Mining Engineers, the Century Association of New York, and the Republican Club of East Orange, New Jersey.

Mr. Boller was married, in Philadelphia, in April, 1864, to Miss Katharine Newbold, daughter of William Henry Newbold. They have five children: Margaretta, William Newbold, Alfred Pancoast, Richard Emlen, and Mary Newbold.