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(*Western
Edition*)

*Notables of
the West*

BEING THE PORTRAITS AND BIOGRAPHIES
OF PROGRESSIVE MEN OF THE
WEST WHO HAVE HELPED IN
THE DEVELOPMENT AND
HISTORY MAKING OF
THIS WONDERFUL
COUNTRY



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ERICSON, JOHN ERNST, City Engineer and Chairman Harbor Subway Commission, Chicago, Illinois, was born in Sweden, October 21, 1858, the son of Anders and Sophia (Lind) Ericson. He married Miss Inez Lydia Malmgren at Chicago, in 1888. She died in 1893. In 1896 he married Miss Esther Elizabeth Malmgren. The issue of the first union is Mildred Inez, who in 1913 became the wife of Ralph Haven Quinlan. There have been no children of the second marriage.

Mr. Ericson received his early education in the common schools until 1872, when he entered the high school and College at Upsala, Sweden, which he attended until 1876, then entering the Royal Polytechnic Institute at Stockholm. He graduated this institution with the degree of Civil Engineer in 1880. He came to the United States in 1881, his first post of importance in this country being as Resident Engineer of the Toledo, Cincinnati and St. Louis Railroad, with headquarters at Cowden, Shelby County, Illinois. He retained this position during 1881 and until the summer of 1882, when he accepted a place as bridge designer with Hopkins & Co., of St. Louis. In 1883 he was appointed assistant on Government surveys in connection with the proposed enlargement of the Illinois and Mississippi River canal and the construction of the Hennepin Canal. He had an important part in making the surveys on these projects and some part in outlining the entire plan. From 1884 until part of the year 1885 he was a draughtsman in the water department of the city of Chicago. He became Assistant City Engineer of Chicago in 1885 and retained this post until 1889 when he was selected as Assistant Chief Engineer by the city of Seattle, Washington, to aid in designing the new gravity water works system that was then about to be built there.

In 1890 the Sanitary District of Chicago, the body which has control and supervision of the great drainage canal system at Chicago, claimed his services. He remained in this service until 1892, when he became Assistant Engineer in the Chicago Bureau of Engineering. In 1893 he was appointed First Assistant City Engineer of Chicago and in 1897 was elevated to the post of City Engineer, which place he has uninterruptedly held ever since. As First Assistant City Engineer and as City Engineer he has been in charge of the design and construction of all additions to the water supply system of the city, projects involving the outlay of millions of dollars and providing for the water supply of the second greatest city in the United States with its millions of inhabitants. The Chicago water system has, during the years of Mr. Ericson's incumbency, been increased as follows: Pumping stations, from two to fifteen;

capacity from 350,000,000 to 900,000,000 gallons per twenty-four hours; number of miles of mains, from 1400 to 2500.

As City Engineer Mr. Ericson is also in charge of all bridge construction and operation and is called upon to give expert opinion on a multiplicity of engineering subjects connected with the many city betterment projects which are taken up every year by the city of Chicago to care for the increased business and living facilities necessitated

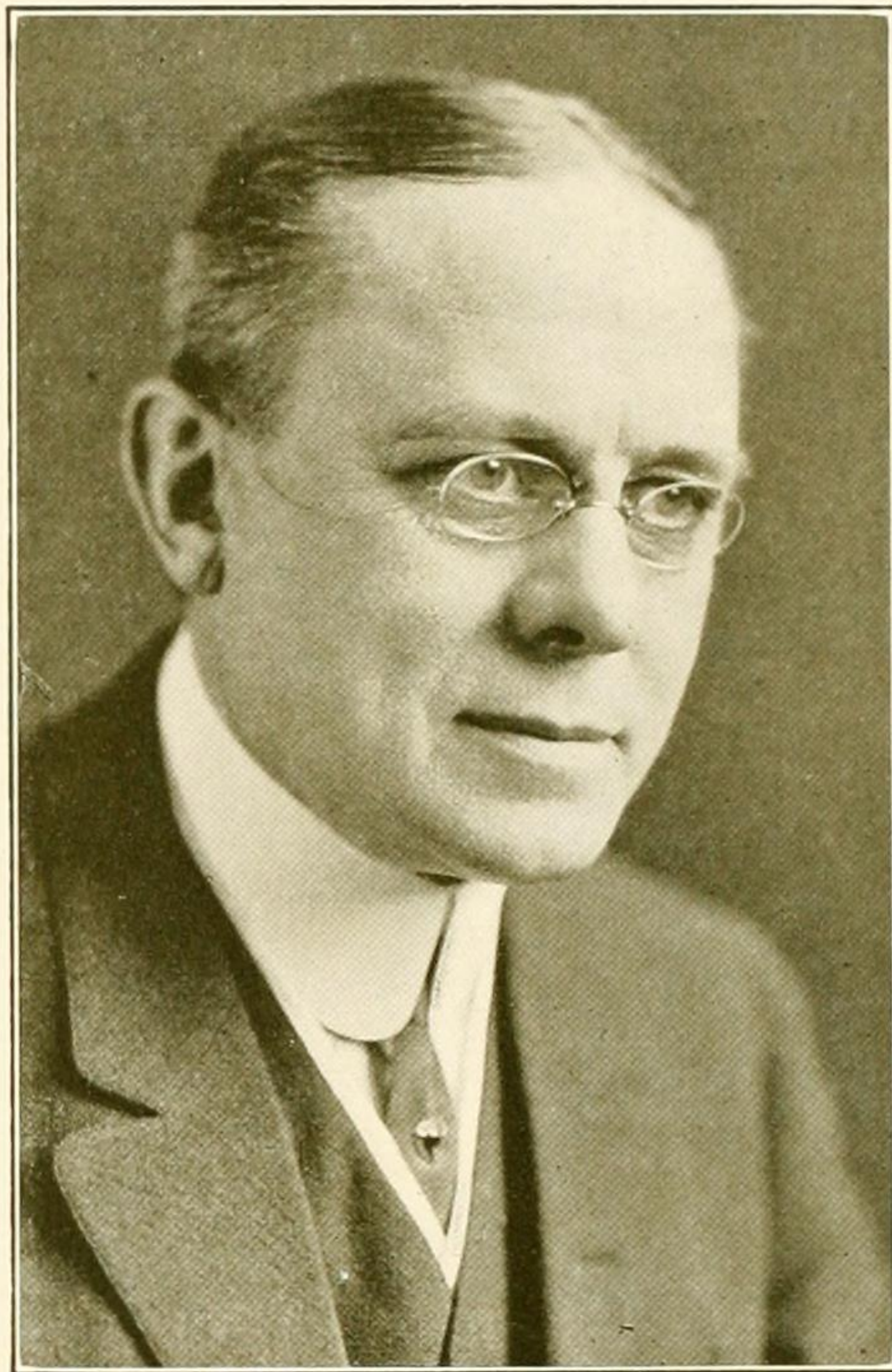
by the rapidly spreading western metropolis. To aid in solving the city transportation problem of providing proper facilities for the use of the Chicago River by boats and the passage of the streets by cars and other vehicles as well as thousands of pedestrians, Mr. Ericson has developed a special design of bascule bridges, the first of these having been constructed in 1901. Eleven of these structures are now in operation and five in course of construction. Plans for several of these are being prepared in addition to the double deck one with a clear span of 209 feet, which is being designed to cross the river at the north end of Michigan avenue so as to make complete the boulevard scheme that will link the North and South Sides of Chicago with one continuous beautiful thoroughfare.

Mr. Ericson has had exceptional opportunities for experiments to determine the elements of flow of water in large tunnels and

presented an exhaustive treatise on this subject to the Western Society of Engineers in 1911, for which he received the society's medal. He has published other treatises and reports on water works, paving, harbors, subways, etc., among which may be mentioned "The Water Supply System of Chicago, Its Past, Present and Future," "Report on Transportation Subways for Chicago," "Report on Creosote Block Pavements," "Report on Public Water Works."

Mr. Ericson is President of the Swedish Engineers' Society of Chicago, a member of the American Society of Civil Engineers, American Society of Mechanical Engineers, Member of the Western Society of Engineers and of the American Water Works Association.

Mr. Ericson is recognized as one of the leading authorities in the United States on city betterment and as an engineer who has successfully solved many of the great obstacles that beset the larger municipalities in devising systems of caring for their giant populations. He has retained his post in Chicago under various administrations of different political complexions. Politics has never entered into his administration of the engineering department, and numerous structures and edifices stand today as monuments to the economy and efficiency of his supervision.



JOHN E. ERICSON