

WILLIAM CASPAR GRAUSTEIN—IN MEMORIAM

William Caspar Graustein was born in Cambridge, Mass., November 15, 1888. He graduated from Harvard, Magna cum Laude in 1910. He spent the next year in the same place doing graduate work in mathematics, his main interest being then, as ever afterwards, in geometry. He received his first initiation into the higher branches of that subject by reading Klein's incomparable 1893 lectures on "Höhere Geometrie." As a matter of fact this nearly had a most disastrous effect, for when Study in Bonn heard that his prospective pupil had been reading Klein, he wrote, "So ist er ganz und gar verdorben." However, Study relented sufficiently to receive him in the autumn of 1911, thereby initiating a close personal and intellectual intimacy that lasted many years, and had the deepest influence on the whole of Graustein's subsequent career.

He took the doctor's degree, Summa cum Laude in July, 1913, and returned at once to Harvard as instructor in mathematics. He was then promoted to an assistant professorship in the newly formed Rice Institute in Houston, Texas. He joined his Cambridge friend Griffith Conrad Evans in building up there, with the warm approval of the President Edgar Odell Lovett, the most advanced mathematical centre south of Mason and Dixon's line. This lasted for four fruitful years, then came the war. Graustein was bound he would serve his country, in spite of official discouragement on account of his name and antecedents, and serve he did in the Ordnance Department at the proving ground at Aberdeen, Maryland, eventually becoming a first lieutenant.

He returned to Harvard in the autumn of 1919 to help in the congenial task of rehabilitating the Division of Mathematics, which in one year had lost three of its most valuable members through death and transfer. He worked mightily at that task till the day of his death. He was chairman of the Division from 1932 to 1937, and Assistant Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences 1939-41. But he served mathematics outside his own university as well, acting for twelve years (1924-36) as an Associate Editor, and for five years (1936-41) as one of the Editors, of the Transactions of the American Mathematical Society, and chairman of the very busy organizing committee of the proposed 1940 International Mathematical Congress in 1938. He was killed in a motor accident, January 22, 1941.

Graustein's doctoral thesis, written with Study, was entitled "Eine reelle Abbildung analytischer komplexer Raumkurven." For a number of years Study had been interested in the geometry of the complex