William Jenney Biography

William Jenney

The following sections of this BookRags Literature Study Guide is offprint from Gale's For Students Series: Presenting Analysis, Context, and Criticism on Commonly Studied Works: Introduction, Author Biography, Plot Summary, Characters, Themes, Style, Historical Context, Critical Overview, Criticism and Critical Essays, Media Adaptations, Topics for Further Study, Compare & Contrast, What Do I Read Next?, For Further Study, and Sources.

(c)1998-2002; (c)2002 by Gale. Gale is an imprint of The Gale Group, Inc., a division of Thomson Learning, Inc. Gale and Design and Thomson Learning are trademarks used herein under license.

The following sections, if they exist, are offprint from Beacham's Encyclopedia of Popular Fiction: "Social Concerns", "Thematic Overview", "Techniques", "Literary Precedents", "Key Questions", "Related Titles", "Adaptations", "Related Web Sites". (c)1994-2005, by Walton Beacham.

The following sections, if they exist, are offprint from Beacham's Guide to Literature for Young Adults: "About the Author", "Overview", "Setting", "Literary Qualities", "Social Sensitivity", "Topics for Discussion", "Ideas for Reports and Papers". (c)1994-2005, by Walton Beacham.

All other sections in this Literature Study Guide are owned and copyrighted by BookRags, Inc.



Contents

William Jenney Biography.....1

Contents.....2

Biography.....3

Biography

One of the main factors that identify modern architecture is the shift from load-bearing walls to load-bearing frameworks. William Le Baron Jenney started this architectural revolution with construction of the Home Insurance Building in Chicago in 1884. It was the first major structure to use an iron framework as its sole means of support.

Born in Fairhaven, Massachusetts, in 1832, of English Puritan ancestry, Jenney was influenced by his father, who had carried on the family's maritime tradition as agent and owner of a fleet of whaling ships. After the whaling industry failed in the 1850s, Jenney's father entered the insurance business.

Jenney travelled extensively during his early years. He was probably most influenced architecturally by his witnessing of the rapid rebuilding of San Francisco after fire destroyed its wood buildings in 1850, and the city was quickly rebuilt with brick. According to his partner, William Mundie, Jenney was also influenced by his contacts with primitive societies like the Hawaiians whose dwellings were of frame construction.

Jenney received formal engineering training at the Ecole Centrale des Arts et Manufactures in France from 1853 to 1856. During this period, the first iron beams were being produced as replacements for wood flooring for fireproofing.

Jenney married Elizabeth Cobb of Cleveland in 1867. That same year he was attracted to Chicago, and was appointed chief engineer of the West Chicago Park Engineers in 1869. Jenney was instrumental in planning Chicago's grand park scheme.

The Great Chicago Fire in October, 1871 was a disaster for most, but a boon to aspiring architects like Jenney. He designed many commercial, religious, and residential buildings during the 1870s and 1880s. His Home Insurance Building was his response for a call for improved fireproofing techniques.

In his later years, Jenney designed buildings for the Columbian Exhibition of 1892 and the YMCA Building in 1893. Jenney retired in 1905 and turned the business over to Mundie. Jenney loved California and its gardens, and he died in 1907 while visiting Los Angeles.