Edwin H. Armstrong Encyclopedia Article

Edwin H. Armstrong

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1890-1954

American electrical engineer who invented the regenerative circuit, which laid the foundation for modern radio and television circuitry. (A circuit indicates the complete path followed by an electric current from an energy source, to the energy-using device, and back to the source again.) Edwin H. Armstrong was born in New York City in 1890. At the age of 14, he was thrilled by tales of Guglielmo Marconi's (1874-1937) first transmission of a wireless message across the Atlantic Ocean, and was determined to one day become an inventor. Armstrong studied electrical engineering at Columbia University, and it was there that he began work on his regenerative circuit, a device which amplified television or radio signals so that they could be heard across a room. He later invented the superheterodyne circuit, which amplified weak electromagnetic waves and today forms the basis of most radio, radar, and television reception. Arguably his greatest achievement was the creation of a wide frequency radio transmission signal, which became known as FM radio.