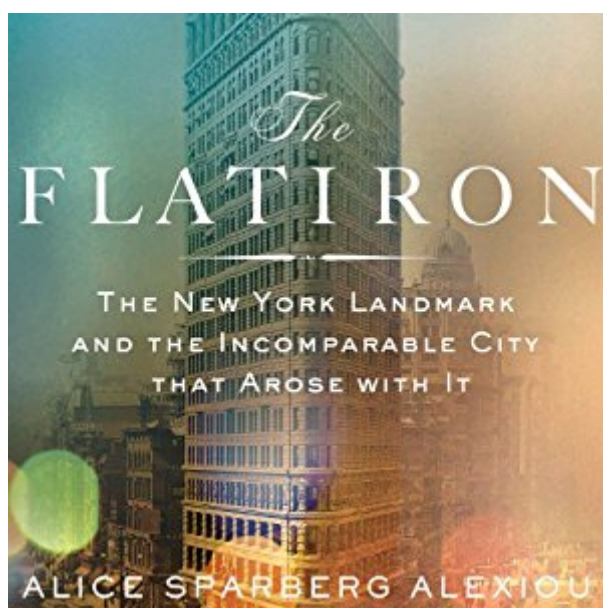


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The Flatiron: The New York Landmark And The Incomparable City That Arose With It



Synopsis

The marvelous story of the Flatiron: the instantly recognizable building that signaled the start of a new era in New York history. Critics hated it. The public feared it would topple over. Passersby were knocked down by the winds. But even before it was completed, the Flatiron Building had become an unforgettable part of New York City. The Flatiron Building was built by the Chicago-based Fuller Company - a group founded by George Fuller, "the father of the skyscraper" - to be their New York headquarters. The company's president, Harry Black, was never able to make the public call the Flatiron the Fuller Building, however. Black's was the country's largest real estate firm, constructing Macy's department store, and soon after the Plaza Hotel, the Savoy Hotel, and many other iconic buildings in New York as well as in other cities across the country. With an ostentatious lifestyle that drew constant media scrutiny, Black made a fortune only to meet a tragic, untimely end. In *The Flatiron*, Alice Sparberg Alexiou chronicles not just the story of the building but the heady times in New York at the dawn of the 20th century. It was a time when Madison Square Park shifted from a promenade for rich women to one for gay prostitutes; when photography became an art; motion pictures came into existence; the booming economy suffered increasing depressions; jazz came to the forefront of popular music - and all within steps of one of the city's best-known and best-loved buildings.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Even to this day, people look at the Flatiron Building and marvel that it could be and was built. It is a

triangular building on a small parcel of land that at one time was a major intersection in the City of New York. It is iconic for a number of reasons....it was the first true modern skyscraper, it awed people that it didn't blow over due to the very weird shape and size and it was, at one time, in a very prestigious New York neighborhood. This book covers the story of not just the building, but also of how the building came to be and the men that were at work running the commercial real estate business in New York and other major cities across the country. At the time of the design and building of the Flatiron, much was at work in New York. George Fuller, the man behind the building had built what was the largest commercial construction management company in the city at that time and was involved in numerous projects to put buildings up. He erected the Flatiron to be the flagship building of his company and to become the headquarters of his company. Construction management was a tad different then. The construction management company did everything from procure a piece of land to hire an architect and then build the finished building. They were hired by companies to erect flagship properties and were given wide latitude. Along the way, Fuller amassed a fortune and a large holding of land. He and several others created the first real estate trust which ended up imploding a number of years later. All of the players are interesting and this looks at a side of New York elite that are rarely thought of. It also details some of the construction techniques and how building codes were changed to allow these massive buildings to come into reality. There was one significant flaw in the book that I had a hard time overlooking, although it is not a huge issue. It is obvious that the author does not understand steel construction or the engineering that went into these buildings. I suspect she obtained her reference materials that were not totally accurate and just wrote what had been written previously. An example is when describing the Great Chicago fire, which rattled many builders and building officials. She mentions that the cast iron fronts of the buildings melted and then collapsed. They didn't melt....they elongated from the heat and became deformed leading to collapse which is a totally different scenario. In addition, she kept referring, throughout the book, to the fire proof nature of the building. Anyone involved in fire protection will tell you there is no fire proof building....just fire resistant ones. Overall, a very interesting book and one that is well worth the read if you enjoy history, engineering or are fascinated by how things came to be. Just overlook the author's problems in dealing with engineering issues.

The purchase was fine. The book is okay as far as the title suggests but severely goes off the subject into the lives of so many who really had nothing to do with the building itself.

It is a little difficult to categorize this book because it accomplishes so much. It is part urban history,

a portrait of a great city, a chronicle/personal history of its owners and builders, and an early history of 20th skyscrapers with this specific building as its focal point. The Flatiron was designed and constructed on an odd parcel of land in a then desirable Manhattan location at the dawn of the 20th century. The author breaks down the building's design and construction in detail and tells the story of the real estate moguls, architects, builders, politicians, and artisans who saw the building come to fruition. The book also examines the building's twisted history that saw it through world wars, a great economic depression, an odd ownership pact, the changing fortunes of a neighborhood, historic preservation, and eventual restoration and modernization. The Flatiron works on a lot of levels because it manages to do what most good stories about inanimate objects should; it makes the Flatiron come alive through its rich history and the interesting people that inhabited its halls. Alice Sparberg Alexiou has gone as far as one might in turning up everything that is currently available pertaining to her subject and has created a book that is interesting and rich with revelations.

Good book about the author's personal connection to the Flat Iron Bldg.

Great book about not only the history of The Flatiron building but Chicago architecture & the men behind the building of great iconic buildings.

Loved it.

One of my favorite buildings in NYC.... the story is fascinating.....

Good read. Of course, keep in mind that I am an engineer and contractor.

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