



The Innovators: The Engineering Pioneers who Transformed America

By David P. Billington

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A richly illustrated introduction to the engineering triumphs that made America modern

In this age of microchips and deep space probes, it's hard to imagine life before electricity or passenger trains. An astonishing series of engineering innovations paved the way to the twentieth century, and transformed America into the world's mightiest industrial power. The Innovators tells the exciting story of the engineering pioneers whose discoveries so dramatically altered commerce, industry, and world history. The book takes readers into the workshops of America's early engineering geniuses, explaining how they came up with their ideas and later applied them in the marketplace. Devotees of history and technology will appreciate the finely drawn profiles of America's technical wizards, from the famous--including Robert Fulton, the inventor of the steamboat; Samuel F.B. Morse, the inventor of the telegraph; and Thomas Edison, inventor of the first electrical power network--to the lesser known, such as J. Edgar Thompson, who built the Pennsylvania Railroad.

* From the author of the critically acclaimed *The Tower and the Bridge*

* Features over 80 illustrations of the engineers and their inventions

DAVID P. BILLINGTON (Princeton, New Jersey), a professor of civil engineering at Princeton University, is the author of *The Tower and the Bridge*, and *Robert Maillart's Bridges: The Art of Engineering*, which won the 1979 Dexter Prize as the outstanding book on the history of technology.

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Editorial Review

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In a world rocked constantly by an almost overwhelming string of technological wonders, it's easy to lose sight of the 18th- and 19th-century engineering breakthroughs that set the stage for today's scientific and electronic advances. In **The Innovators: The Engineering Pioneers Who Made America Modern**, David P. Billington presents a series of intriguing profiles of such pacesetters as Robert Fulton, Thomas Edison, and Samuel Morse, whose inventions are responsible for so many of the developments we currently enjoy.

From the Publisher

Written from an engineering perspective, this fascinating book emphasizes the innovations that were truly basic to U.S. industrialization. The author uses a three-sided view to describe American engineering history: what great engineers actually did, the political and economic conditions within which they worked, and the influence that these designers and their achievements had on the nation. Billington explores the scientific basis of engineering through elementary formulas that also include the social issues of regulated loads, visually striking forms, acceptable risks, environmental issues, and the production of wealth.

From the Inside Flap

The Innovators They built the future. Their ingenuity, their vision, their genius propelled a young nation toward the twentieth century, and paved the way for America's emergence as the world's leading industrial power. The Innovators tells the impressive story of the engineering pioneers whose designs revolutionized commerce, industry, and world history. Enter the workshops of America's early engineering geniuses and discover how they came up with their ideas and applied them to the marketplace. David Billington, acclaimed author of *The Tower and the Bridge*, reveals the strokes of brilliance behind such landmark developments as the steamboat, electric power, and the rise of the iron and steel industry. He explains each major innovation through the story of the remarkable new engineering formulas that made it possible, showing that one key to engineering progress is the discovery of fundamental relationships in the physical world. He also explores the political and social conditions that allowed these brilliant individuals to implement their ideas, and the sweeping changes that followed in their wake. Who were the innovators? Some are legendary: Robert Fulton, inventor of the steamboat; Samuel Morse, inventor of the telegraph; and Thomas Edison, inventor of the incandescent lightbulb. Others are not as well known, however, and readers will be introduced to many whose contributions, if not their names, have stood the test of time: people like J. Edgar Thompson, who built the Pennsylvania Railroad; and Thomas Telford, who revolutionized large-scale bridge building and design. In the age of microchips and space probes, *The Innovators* brings insight and perspective to America's engineering history.

Users Review

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