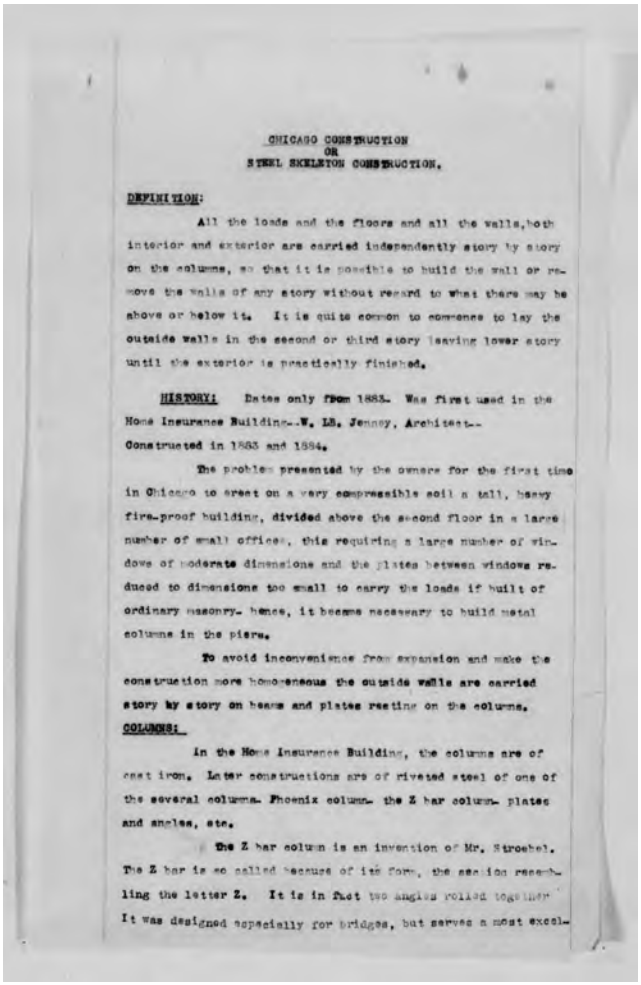
"Chicago Construction or Steel Skeleton Construction", Jenney, William Le Baron [author]
The Art Institute of Chicago
Skyscrapers Inquiry Unit

Manuscript/Typescript about skyscrapers of Chicago that used the construction method known as *Chicago Construction* or *Steel Construction*. It is written by William Le Baron, Architect of the Home Insurance Building, which was "the first to use constructional steel and was the building for which the Chicago Construction was invented." It includes details of the construction methods of the Home Insurance Building in 1883 & 1884, the Tacoma Building, and the Masonic Temple. The source of the document is The Art Institute of Chicago's Ryerson and Burnham Archives' digital Archive Collection.



CHICAGO CONSTRUCTION
OR
STEEL SKELETON CONSTRUCTION.

DEFINITION:

All the loads and the floors and all the walls,both interior and exterior are carried independently story by story on the columns, so that it is possible to build the wall or remove the walls of any story without regard to what there may be above or below it. It is quite common to commence to lay the outside walls in the second or third story leaving lower story until the exterior is practically finished.

HISTORY: Dates only from 1883. Was first used in the Home Insurance Building--W. LB. Jenney, Architect--Constructed in 1883 and 1884.

The problem presented by the owners for the first time in Chicago to erect on a very compressible soil a tall, heavy fire-proof building, divided above the second floor in a large number of small offices, this requiring a large number of windows of moderate dimensions and the piers between windows reduced to dimensions too small to carry the loads if built of ordinary masonry. hence, it became necessary to build metal columns in the piers.

To avoid inconvenience from expansion and make the construction more homogeneous the outside walls are carried story by story on beams and plates resting on the columns.

COLUMNS:

In the Home Insurance Building, the columns are of cast iron. Later constructions are of riveted steel of one of the several columns. Phoenix column. the Z bar column. plates and angles, etc.

The Z bar column is an invention of Mr. Stroebel. The Z bar is so called because of its form, the section resembling the letter Z. It is in fact two angles rolled together It was designed especially for bridges, but serves a most excel-

Title/Project Name
"Chicago Construction or Steel Skeleton Construction"
Date Designed or Built
After 1889
Architect/Designer/Creator
Jenney, William Le Baron
Architect or Designer Notes
Jenney, William Le Baron [author]
View or Detail Type
Object
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See Also:
Jenney, W. L. B. (William Le Baron), 1832-1907. Architects--Biography.Published in "Current News Supplement" 06/22/1907
http://digital-libraries.saic.edu/cdm/compoundobject/collection/mqc/id/63582/rec/2
&
"Air Castles… Castles in the Air", Colloquial account of the history of the Home Insurance Building and the development of its structure.
http://digital-libraries.saic.edu/cdm/compoundobject/collection/mqc/id/63587/rec/17