



# The Flatiron: The New York Landmark and the Incomparable City That Arose with It

*Alice Sparberg Alexiou*

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*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 twentieth 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.

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