

Buildings Stay, We Go
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As we pass through our cities we often look up at a familiar building and it gives us a sense of neighborhood, place or even identity. Certain buildings become icons defining a district or even an entire city. We know their names and sometimes the name of the architectural firm that designed them. This is a story about several names, which have been for the most part forgotten, though their structures still grace the cityscape and are admired features of the skyline.

This paper begins with a name very well-known name. Daniel Burnham's name has become synonymous with big thinking both in planning and architecture. The 1892 World's Columbian Exposition whose building he directed had a profound effect on American architecture and planning. It laid the groundwork for the *Plan of Chicago*.

Burnham's classically-inspired planning principles spread to other cities where his planning efforts altered the urban landscape. The neo-classical building designs of the 1892 Exposition influenced the architectural language of American cities until the late 1920s, when the Art Deco style emerged. The functionally and structurally expressive style of the "Chicago School" was replaced with the Beaux-arts classically-influenced forms. This style, originally applied to low-rise buildings, morphed into the cladding for the emerging group of skyscrapers built after the 1890s.

The success of the 1892 Chicago Columbian Exposition propelled Burnham and his firm, known first as Burnham and Root, later D.H. Burnham and Co., into great prominence, and it became one of the largest

and most successful architectural firms in the nation. As with any large firm with many commissions, one man could not be responsible for all of the creative thoughts and ideas required to accomplish the quantity of work expected. Burnham spent less time on the actual design of buildings, and more time on managing the firm and generating new work. It took teams of professionals to prepare the designs and documents for these increasingly large undertakings. With the death of John Wellborn Root on January 15, 1891, at the age of 41. Burnham was left without his talented and trusted design partner, right on the cusp of the Columbian Exposition.

Daniel Burnham had been put in charge of coordinating the design and construction of the 1892 Exposition, and to the chagrin of many Chicago architects, reached out to a number of New York firms, including the firm of Richard Morris Hunt. The designs of the principal buildings around the Great Court of Honor were given to 5 New York firms. In total, about 70 firms were involved on projects, large and small.

Hunt had worked with the talented but somewhat erratic Charles Atwood on projects which included the lavish Vanderbilt mansions. (There were rumors that Atwood was an opium addict). Burnham must have become acquainted with Atwood through Hunt and perhaps other New York connections, and hired him to fill the Chief Design Partner position for the 1892 Columbian Exposition left vacant by Root's death.

In turn, Atwood was aware of a talented, young New York architect named Frederick Dinkelberg who had recently struck out on his own, and he enlisted him to help with the design work for the 1892 Exposition. It is his story that we will try to reconstruct.

Frederick Philip Dinkelberg was born in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, in 1859 to Fredrick and Mary Dinkelberg (née Effinger). He had one sibling, a younger brother, Theodore. His parents were Mennonites who had immigrated from Germany. According to some reports, his mother was a member of the Italian aristocracy, and a Countess, but this seems rather unlikely. It was reported that his father became a wealthy contractor.

Little is known about his early education, but he attended the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, according to their archives from 1879-1881. The Academy's exuberant building, designed by Frank ("Fearless Frank") Furness, must have impressed and influenced the young architect.

Upon finishing his studies in 1881, Dinkelberg moved to New York City, where he began working for George Edward Harding. He progressed with Harding, eventually becoming his junior partner, and the firm taking the name of Harding and Dinkelberg. During this period, he must have felt sufficiently successful to take a wife, and did so on Feb 10, 1885, marrying Emily Dunn from Trenton Falls, New York.

The firm enjoyed a successful period and designed a number of Office buildings and loft structures, as well as interior alterations to

Banqueting and dining facilities at the Hoffman House Hotel. In 1886, they received the commission for a large private residence for wealthy banker, John O'Brien, in Newport, RI. Harding and Dinkelberg boasted to the press that they were working on 20 buildings in New York, and other states, which were to be ready for construction in the spring. This would indicate that they were very successful.

In October of 1887 Dinkelberg was interviewed about the condition of wages and employment in the architectural profession, and even though he was in a managing position, he was somewhat sympathetic to the plight of the overworked and underpaid draftsman. He attributed their difficult situation to the architects who met the demand for inexpensive building plans being driven by rampant real estate speculation. But Dinkelberg remained optimistic about a young architect's prospects and concluded that, "A solid man would always be needed."

In 1888 he decided to leave Harding, remarking he had worked 13 years for others, and was now ready to "hang out his own shingle". He opened offices at #3 Union Square and continued with the same sort of projects he had been doing with Harding. Perhaps at this point he had developed a professional reputation of substance and felt confident enough to strike out on his own. It was reported that he was even working on sketches for a new Tammany Hall, which had been damaged by fire, but there seems to be no follow up on the report. His clients included two developers, a Mr. John Kehoe and a Mr. William Broadbent. Both engaged

him for repeat projects. The work consisted of designs for 7 to 9 story buildings, generally on double lots, containing loft space, retail space and sometimes apartments. Aside from these commercial projects he designed a 5-story residential building, with a greenhouse on top, at 60th and Fifth Avenue for Mr. Jim Hodges.

In 1891 Dinkelberg went to Charleston, South Carolina to meet with wealthy banker and financier, Andrew Simonds. He received the commission for a large classical revival residence at 4 South Battery Street in Charleston. The massive house was completed around 1895. Mr. Simonds commissioned the house to please his New Orleans-born wife, Margherita, and named the imposing structure, Villa Margherita, in her honor. The great neo-classical block boasted an impressive Corinthian portico and inner atrium. It was considered one of the grandest houses in Charleston.

In the early 1890s Dinkelberg completed three apartment houses in the Sugar Hill District of Harlem, two of which survive at 12 and 16 East 132nd Street. The buildings were advanced for their time and anticipated the New York State Tenement House Act of 1901 which mandated improved light, ventilation, and safety. They are brick structures, with brownstone lintels and doorframes. Originally designed for upper middle-class families, the buildings have recently been listed as Significant Architectural Resources in a document prepared by Columbia University.

It is not clear how Dinkelberg managed the completion of these projects as he began working for Burnham, and how he divided his time between New York and Chicago.

Another important person in our story is Joachim Giæver. A structural engineer, Joachim Gotsche Giæver, was born in a small town near Tromsø, Norway, in 1856. He went to the Trondheim Technical College and graduated with a degree in Civil Engineering in 1881. Looking for greater opportunity than was available in Norway, he emigrated to the United States in 1882, and settled in St. Paul, Minnesota, working for the Pacific Railroad Company as a draftsman. At the end of 1883 he moved to Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, to work for the Schiffler Bridge Company, where after two years he was promoted to Chief Engineer. Aside from designing bridge structures in the Pittsburgh area, Giæver was responsible for a rather unique endeavor, the interior structural framework design for the Statue of Liberty.

In 1891, Giæver relocated to Chicago to take on the assignment of Assistant Chief Engineer for the World's Columbian Exposition. In this role he designed what was then one of the world's longest truss spans at 368 feet. He was also one of the first structural engineers to deal with wind bracing. After the Exposition he spent three years as a general contractor, then in 1896, took on the role of bridge designer for the Sanitary District of Chicago. He designed several bridges across the Chicago Drainage Canal. In 1898, Daniel Burnham, familiar with Giæver

from his work on the Columbian Exposition, offered him the position of Chief Engineer of D. H. Burnham and Company.

It is difficult to discern exactly who was responsible for which projects at the D.H. Burnham Company around this time. With the death of Charles Atwood in 1895 one week after he was dismissed from the firm, Pierce Anderson assumed the role of Chief Designer. Dinkelberg's status subsequently rose. It is at this point that Dinkelberg and Giæver began to work together. There are records which indicate some of the buildings to which Dinkelberg and Giæver were clearly assigned.

The first of these collaborations that we can clearly identify is the Fuller Building at 175 Fifth Avenue in New York City. Completed in 1902 and better known as the Flatiron Building, this important tower showed how Burnham's reputation had spread across the country. At 285 feet and 22 stories, it was one of the tallest buildings in New York. Built on a triangular lot, the structure tapers on the north end to a width of only six and a half feet. This tapering adds to the illusion of a soaring tower. The original designs had an elaborate top, with setbacks and a clock. However, the final design was simplified, and it is sometimes said that the narrow elevation is based on a Greek column, with a three-story base, shaft, and a two-story capital. The tower's structural steel frame was one of the first to seriously take into consideration the need for wind bracing, utilizing Giæver's expertise in the area.

Having previously lived in New York, Dinkelberg remained somewhat active in the New York social scene. A member of the German Liederkranz Society, he was responsible for the decorations at their annual gala masked ball. The *New York Times* gave a glowing review of their 1900 event, making special note of the decorations.

Dinkelberg also had supervisory responsibilities during the construction of the Flatiron Building. On August 29, 1901, Burnham wrote Dinkelberg, who was staying at the Holland House in New York, that an employee named Brown "has written definite information concerning entrances, columns and other details. This must definitely be decided while you are in New York. You understand my views and must take responsibility on the spot." This letter illustrates Burnham's trust in Dinkelberg on matters of design, and his faith that Dinkelberg would oversee the execution of such a major commission to his satisfaction.

A 1903 photograph of the Flatiron Building by Edward Steichen, with its soaring backlight shaft against a rainy streetscape, became a seminal image of urban America during the period, and the building remains to this day one of the best-loved in New York City. The building was also photographed by Alfred Stieglitz and painted by numerous artists. The entire neighborhood is now referred to as the "Flatiron District."

Back in Chicago, the Heyworth Building, completed in 1904, is also credited to Dinkelberg as a design associate. The 19-story building was

built by Otto Young, who was a wholesale jeweler and real estate investor, and was named after Young's son-in-law, Heyworth. The building was designed to house the jeweler's trade, establishing the credentials and experience which would be valuable for the future Jewelers Building. The building combined the simplicity of the earlier Chicago School, with a decorative cornice unusual for the period. The building's exterior utilized Sullivanesque ornament which, though more geometric than his typical organic style, still differed from the purely classical style. The geometric relief softens and provides texture to the facade and engages the passerby.

The Railway Exchange Building of 1903, until recently known as the Santa Fe Center, and now crowned with a Motorola sign, was another collaboration between Dinkelberg and Giæver. This quarter-block building of white terra cotta is similar to many of the great office blocks being built at the time, but perhaps one of the most handsome of its type. Seventeen floors of offices wrap around a center light court, whose lower floors are enclosed by a glass roof to provide a grand lobby. The building's exterior is organized, as was the Flatiron, with a base, shaft, and top. Also, as with the Flatiron, a gentle rhythm of shallow bay windows, a feature of the Chicago School, provides a slight ripple effect to the classic facade.

Dinkelberg was the designer of many of D.H. Burnham and Company's finest buildings, but Burnham himself still offered input. Burnham writes in a letter to Dinkelberg on July 21, 1905, "It seems to me

that your terracotta work on the Commercial National Bank should be enriched with surface ornament. The top part of your building is rich, and the lower part is so strong it seems to me that some enrichment of the center will be necessary. In order to make the thing hang together from the top to the bottom, have you thought of the possibility of using ornamental columns instead of the strict Greek columns?" This project at 72 West Adams was completed in 1907 and was one of Dinkelberg's final projects for Burnham. Sketches for his detailing of the lighting fixtures survive in the Chicago Architectural Sketch Club Collection. Dinkelberg was a member of the Architectural Sketch Club, the Chicago Architectural Club, and the American Institute of Architects.

On May 11, 1906, Burnham wrote Dinkelberg expressing his regret that he was leaving the firm, stating that their "connection has been a very happy and satisfactory one to me." He continued, though to say that the break should be "final and complete," perhaps implying that Dinkelberg may have been proposing some sort of phase-out or part-time responsibilities.

Dinkelberg was working on the Commercial National Bank Building at the time. There were reports that he would disappear from the office at 4 o'clock or so every day to head down the bar for afternoon refreshment, which may have had something to do with his departure. (Giæver is also reported to have been a "drinking man," who liked to "arm wrestle" his companions after a few drinks.) Whatever actually prompted Dinkelberg

to resign is unknown. Perhaps he wished to make his own design decisions at that point in his life without having to submit to the critique of Burnham and others.

After leaving Burnham's firm, Dinkelberg opened his own office, Frederick P. Dinkelberg, Architect, at the Merchants Loan and Trust building at 135 South Adams in Chicago. Now, with more time on his hands, Dinkelberg applied his energy to codifying his design principles. Dinkelberg is sometimes credited with being an important thinker in architecture, but very little remains of his efforts in this regard. One such artifact is a piece he wrote in the June 1908, *Inland Architect News and Record* entitled, "Rhythm and Architecture." Here, in the style of the period, he extols the principles of rhythm and its crucial importance to good architectural design. He finishes the piece with "Rhythm is perhaps only another name for order, which, as we are told by the poet, is heaven's first law."

In 1910, D.H. Burnham and Company's Peoples Gas Building was completed, and Giæver, still in the employ of Burnham, is credited with being responsible for the structure. It is similar in plan and function to the Railway Exchange Building, but more strictly classical, with its massive granite columns and more severely detailed exterior.

The Conway Building at 111 W. Washington (now known as Burnham Center) is sometimes credited to Dinkelberg. The building was not completed until 1915, long after both Dinkelberg's departure from the

firm and Burnham's death. It is unclear whether the designs were completed before he left the firm in 1906, or whether he was hired back or served as an independent consultant for the building's design.

Sometime between the years 1911 and 1915 Dinkelberg moved to Mill Valley, California for a time, and opened an office in San Francisco at 155 Chronicle Street. It is likely that given his experience at the Columbian Exposition he was there seeking commissions for design work for the Panama-Pacific International Exposition of 1915, which was built in what is now known as the Marina District of San Francisco and includes Bernard Maybeck's iconic Palace of Fine Arts.

Burnham and Dinkelberg remained cordial, and during 1911 they had a fair amount of correspondence. In July of 1911 Burnham was asked for advice by the Lincoln Monument commission which was headed by President William Howard Taft. The commission was looking for a way to solicit design schemes for the proposed monument and considered holding a competition. Responding by letter to a request from Dinkelberg, Burnham assured him that if he was asked to designate the competitors, he would put Dinkelberg on the list.

In November of 1911, Dinkelberg met with Burnham, and thanked him for the meeting in a letter dated Nov 26. It appears that there were in discussions about his returning to the firm. They also had a lengthy discussion about simplicity, clarity, and rhythm with regard to architecture. These were the principles which Dinkelberg wrote about a

few years earlier in his *Inland Architect* article. Later that year, it seems that Dinkelberg may have been considering rejoining Burnham's firm. He wrote letters both on the third and fourth of December from the St. Francis Hotel in San Francisco. In the first he responded to a telegram from Burnham asking him to "come back." He evidently had been looking for a position in San Francisco, and had met with a Mr. McCormick, the Director of Works. A letter of recommendation from Burnham had great weight, and would have insured his getting a position, but he writes "that I prefer to go with you, and stay with you," and says "I will give you the best there is in me." He requests a salary of \$200 per week, which at the time would have been a handsome salary. (in today's dollars that's about \$5,000.00 per week)

In his second letter the next day, Dinkelberg confesses to Burnham that he was "thinking and worrying all day" on the question of salary, and that perhaps it was "presumptuous to set the terms." He goes on to say that he feels he is strong and has deep insight into architectural values but would leave the matter of salary "entirely in your hands."

There is an undated note in which Burnham responds, that "the forces of design are full," and he is "sorry." Perhaps this request for the large salary changed Burnham's mind about the need to bring Dinkelberg back, or maybe conditions had changed, but he never rejoined Burnham's firm.

On June 1, 1912, Daniel Burnham died. Three years after Burnham's death, in 1915, Giæver opened his own firm as a "Consulting Engineer." He was responsible for leading the efforts to recognize in the state statutes the rights of engineers to practice on equal terms with architects, and proudly took that title, which had not previously been recognized as the title of an independent consultant. Sometime around 1915 Dinkelberg and his wife moved to Evanston, IL and took up residence in what was described in the press as a lavish home, but was actually a middle-class bungalow at 2646 N Prairie Ave. In 1916 he teamed with Frederick Dinkelberg to form the firm of Giæver and Dinkelberg.

In 1919, Dinkelberg and Giæver formed a partnership with a Detroit architect Harold Ellington called Giæver Dinkelberg and Ellington of Chicago and Detroit. The firm won a number of commissions in Detroit. Their projects included the 18-story headquarters facility for the Stroh Brewery Company (now called the Grand Park Center). Built in 1922, the office building was noted for its reflection of the Chicago School. Being very simple and straightforward in its design, it was a utilitarian deviation from the more classical approach generally applied by Dinkelberg, almost a look to the future. The building was praised at the time by a local newspaper for "its fascinating beauty combined with great utility." They also secured the commission for the residence of Gari M. Stroh, who later became president of the brewing company. In addition to these commissions, they designed the Bank of Detroit Building on Fort Street.

In spite of their apparent success, the Detroit relationship fell apart after four years, and by 1923 Giæver and Dinkelberg turned their focus again to Chicago. The great claim to fame of their partnership was the Jewelers Building of 1925. Perhaps they received the commission because of Dinkelberg's earlier work on the Heyworth building, which was also designed for the jeweler's trade. Today viewed as one of the iconic buildings along the Wacker Drive parade of structures, it was an interesting building in terms of its program and its engineering and as a symbol of the taste of the period. They associated on the project with another firm, Thilbar and Fugard. This may be due to Giaever's death in May of 1925 and Dinkelberg's inability to complete the project on his own. Like the Flatiron Building in New York, this richly detailed terra-cotta structure topped by a "Belvedere" is one of Chicago's architectural icons along the river.

The building's design included a unique and new idea. The offices in the lower 22 floors surrounded a lift-equipped interior parking structure. The jewelers could bring their cars up to the floor on which their offices were located, thus avoiding the perils of walking down the street with their valuable merchandise. Dinkelberg applied for a patent for the lift mechanism that brought the automobiles up through the structure.

The exterior is an exuberantly expressed 24-story base capped by domed *tempietti*, or small temples, on the four comers. A 12-story tower rises from there to terminate in a richly detailed cupola. This upper dome

originally housed the Stratosphere Club restaurant, reached by a private elevator, and during Prohibition it became a reputed speakeasy hangout run by Al Capone. Strangely enough, the building now houses the architectural offices of Murphy/Jahn. The elegant former speakeasy housed in the dome is now Helmut Jahn's special client presentation area, which seems most appropriate for Murphy/Jahn as a descendant firm of C.F. Murphy, Graham Anderson Probst and White, and D.H. Burnham and Company.

Giæver died on May 29, 1925, at the age of 69. He had designed the structures for over one hundred buildings, was admitted to the Order of St. Olaf by the King of Norway, had been the president of the Engineers Society, and was a founder of the Norwegian Engineers Society, among many other recognitions. His funeral was held on June 2, 1925, at Graceland Cemetery. The pallbearers were members of the Chicago Yacht Club, of which he had been an active member.

It seems that no major commissions followed for Dinkelberg. In the late 1920s he did a small project for millionaire investor Chester Thordarson near Green Bay, Wisconsin.

Dinkelberg may have known Thordarson through Giæver, who served with him on a committee to welcome to Chicago, Admiral Roald Amundsen (discoverer of the South Pole), at a gala dinner at the University Club. The Rock Island Boathouse (1926) was a large stone structure modeled after Althing, Iceland's parliamentary hall. Resembling

a giant Viking hall, the boathouse sits seven feet below the waterline of Lake Michigan, with the hall rising majestically above it. The upper level housed Thordarson's 11,000-volume collection of rare books.

The last years of Dinkelberg's life seem to have been largely unhappy ones. His health was beginning to fail, and he had lost what the *New York Times* referred to as a "substantial fortune" in utilities stocks in the Stock Market Crash of 1929. Perhaps he was tied in with Samuel Insull's investment schemes, or those of Chester Thordarson. He had to sell his home in Evanston and move to a humble apartment at 4138 North Kenmore in Chicago. The last few months of his life saw him on the relief rolls, which must have been an indignity for someone who had achieved so much. After celebrating his 50th wedding anniversary with his wife Emily, who had baked a coffee cake to celebrate the event, he died in his sleep that same evening, February 18, 1935.

Penniless at the time of her husband's death, Mrs. Dinkelberg reached out to friends to assist with the cost of his burial, so that he wouldn't have to be buried in "Potter's Field." His friend and attorney, George F. Killinger, organized and helped pay for the funeral with assistance from Graham Anderson Probst and White, Burnham's sons, and members of the Chicago Chapter of the American Institute of Architects. The service was conducted at the Kimball House on 1801 South Prairie, which was the Clubhouse of the Chicago Architectural Club. He was buried in Wunders Cemetery in Chicago.

Circumstances never improved for his widow, Emily Dunn Dinkelberg, who died 10 years later. Her body was rescued from being used for research at a medical school by members of the American Institute of Architects, who stepped in and paid for her to be laid to rest alongside her husband at Wunders Cemetery.

The works of great men and great firms involve the participation of many individuals whose efforts often go unrecognized. In some cases, their efforts are seminal to that greatness. Their names may sometimes be lost in history, or at other times survive merely as footnotes. But then as now, we must remember that the success of people like Daniel Burnham, whose planning and organization, political skill, marketing instincts, and sheer force of character, propel them to great fame, is dependent on the support of talented and creative people like Frederick Dinkelberg and Joachim Giæver. Without them, and others like them, the success of the D.H. Burnham's of this world would be diminished.