William Le Baron Jenney 
(1832-1907)

- Father of the American Skyscraper
- Grew up in wealthy Massachusetts family
- Left Harvard for Ecole Centrale des Arts et Manufactures in Paris
- Studied Engineering
- Fought in the Civil War and served as chief of engineers in the Army of the Tennessee

http://umhistory.dc.umich.edu/mort/original/1900/12%20University%20Museum/index.html
Early Inspiration

- Designed Humboldt, Garfield and Douglas parks, as well as the Boulevards connecting them, influenced by design of Paris
- Co-Authored *The Principles and Practice of Architecture* with Sanford Loring
- This marked his transition from civil engineer to architect.

Life as an Architect

- Curriculum in France taught that purpose and structure define form
- “He absorbed a philosophy which first of all advocated economy, simplicity, and structural awareness and theorized that aesthetic beauty would naturally result once practical considerations were rationally satisfied. More importantly, Jenney learned a working methodology to implement and realize this outlook.” – Commission on Chicago Landmarks
Importance of Second Leiter Design

- “Huge, rectangular prism...exterior surfacing of columns and spandrels in white Maine granite, with no outbreaks or ornamental detail to interrupt its smooth planes. The extraordinarily wide bays and the unusual story height of 16 feet combine with the slender steel columns to produce this dynamic impression of open and airy spaciousness.”

- “What is essential is that for the first time the steel and wrought-iron skeleton became fully and unambiguously the means of architectonic expression.”

- Carl Condit, *The Chicago School of Architecture*
Levi Z. Leiter
(1834-1904)

- Co-owner of Field & Leiter after purchase from Potter Palmer
- First store to move to Palmer’s State Street Development district
- Sold interest to Field
- Leiter retired from retail after having accumulated great wealth - Field and Leiter were the largest real estate owners in the city.
Real Estate

- Levi Leiter was an early investor in Chicago real estate
- First Leiter building (1879) is his first big real estate project
- Commissions William Le Baron Jenney to design Second Leiter building (1891)
- Leiter leases it to Siegel, Cooper and Company
- Forty years later it becomes Sears, Roebuck and Company’s flagship store.

http://o.tqn.com/d/architecture/1/0/8/7/1/jenney-leiter2-chicago.jpg
**Leiter’s Goals**

- "Leiter wanted a ‘complete and perfect’ building to house a single major retail establishment, but not without the ability to subdivide if required.”

- "Leiter was the rare client who made the fullest use of Jenney's training, permitting the most modern materials and their expression in the building's design. The forward-looking qualities of the building's functionalism have fascinated historians such as Sigfried Giedion, who described it as 'the first high building to exhibit the trend toward pure forms.' And so it does. With a little imagination, one can see the Second Leiter Building as a modern composition of the mid-twentieth century."

  -Theodore Turak (in Sinkevitch, *AIA Guide to Chicago*)