

High Steel

The Daring Men Who Built the World's Greatest Skyline

By Jim Rasenberger

Published by Harper Collins

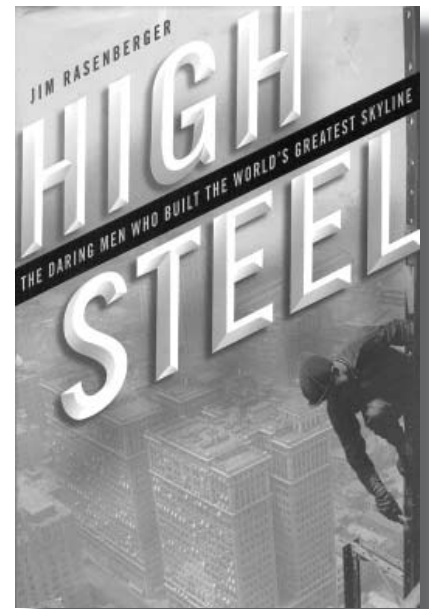
Reviewed by Jim DeStefano

You won't find any mention of LRFD or ASD in this book on structural steel construction. In fact, structural engineers are barely mentioned. This is a book about ironworkers, those roughneck, working class heroes who assemble the steel structures that we design.

This is the story of Mohawk Indians who commute to New York City every week from their reservation in Quebec, and of Newfoundlanders living away from their families 9 months out of the year. Men who work in the most dangerous construction trade and literally "live on the edge."

This book takes you from the construction of New York's first skyscraper, the Flatiron Building in 1901, to the fall of the World Trade Center towers. It takes you from the 1907 collapse of the Quebec Bridge to the construction of the last great suspension bridge, the Verrazano-Narrows in 1964.

You are introduced to Sam Parks, a powerful and corrupt union leader who died in prison in 1904. You also meet Ortie McManigal, a union saboteur who traveled across the country dynamiting non-union construction sites until being apprehended in 1911.



This is an unromantic, un-sanitized account of structural steel construction, and the life and death of ironworkers. This book can best be described as "riveting." ■

Structural Forum

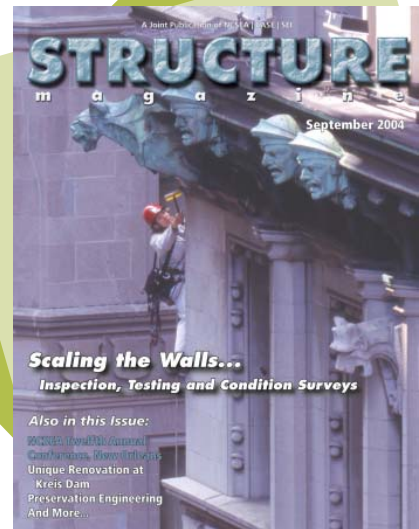
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Mr. Meloy's suggestions seem to be to better regulate the market for structural engineering services. A more effective solution is to better serve the market. We need to recognize that the situations that Mr. Meloy considers are a rejection by the market place of the traditional methods by which we sell our services. As a Specialty Structural Engineer (SSE) as defined by Mr. Meloy, I can state that no one regrets the demise of an over all Structural Engineer of record (SER) more than the SSE's.

We owe society our very best from the standpoint of technical competence and ethics. However, society does not owe us a living in the free market. We must earn it through the utility of our services. Instead of making it illegal for a contractor to hire the SER, perhaps

we should be developing ethical and legal ways for SE's to market their services to contractors as the SER. After all, the contractor is the one who has to deal first with the problems associated with the lack of an SER. If we can't convince contractors that SER services are extremely cost effect (as they are), how can we ever convince an owner?

Thanks to Mr. Meloy for expressing his views on this very important topic. I guess my comments boil down to: In Figure 2, what's wrong with inserting an SER between the General Contractor and Subcontractors? Can



working for a contractor really be that much worse than working for an architect?

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