

# Matthias Baldwin Biography

## Matthias Baldwin

The following sections of this BookRags Literature Study Guide is offprint from Gale's For Students Series: Presenting Analysis, Context, and Criticism on Commonly Studied Works: Introduction, Author Biography, Plot Summary, Characters, Themes, Style, Historical Context, Critical Overview, Criticism and Critical Essays, Media Adaptations, Topics for Further Study, Compare & Contrast, What Do I Read Next?, For Further Study, and Sources.

(c)1998-2002; (c)2002 by Gale. Gale is an imprint of The Gale Group, Inc., a division of Thomson Learning, Inc. Gale and Design and Thomson Learning are trademarks used herein under license.

The following sections, if they exist, are offprint from Beacham's Encyclopedia of Popular Fiction: "Social Concerns", "Thematic Overview", "Techniques", "Literary Precedents", "Key Questions", "Related Titles", "Adaptations", "Related Web Sites". (c)1994-2005, by Walton Beacham.

The following sections, if they exist, are offprint from Beacham's Guide to Literature for Young Adults: "About the Author", "Overview", "Setting", "Literary Qualities", "Social Sensitivity", "Topics for Discussion", "Ideas for Reports and Papers". (c)1994-2005, by Walton Beacham.

All other sections in this Literature Study Guide are owned and copyrighted by BookRags, Inc.

# Contents

<a href="#">Matthias Baldwin Biography.....</a>	<a href="#">1</a>
<a href="#">Contents.....</a>	<a href="#">2</a>
<a href="#">Biography.....</a>	<a href="#">3</a>

# Biography

The youngest of five children, Baldwin was born in Elizabethtown, New Jersey. His father, a carriagemaker, died when Baldwin was five, and the fortune he left to his wife was squandered by lawyers. Baldwin's mother, however, saw to it that her youngest son received an education and apprenticed him to a jeweler in Philadelphia.

Baldwin soon tired of jewelry making and in 1825 decided to open a manufacturing business along with a partner, David Mason. Baldwin demonstrated a great deal of talent in manufacturing, producing a flurry of products in succession, from bookmaking tools to textile and printing processes. Mason, unnerved by Baldwin's engineering prowess, quit the business.

In 1828 Baldwin had constructed a steam engine to run equipment for his firm and when he had the opportunity to examine a locomotive that had been imported to the United States from England, he decided to try his hand at building locomotives. This was a timely decision, for the crude locomotives being built at that time were ripe for improvement. Baldwin, with his keen engineering skills, succeeded immediately. Within two years Baldwin constructed *Old Ironsides*, a six-ton locomotive, for the Philadelphia and Germantown Railroad. *Old Ironsides* became one of the first practical locomotives in America, making daily trips between the two Pennsylvania cities. Over the next ten years, Baldwin built ten more locomotives, and, by the time of his death in 1866, his company had built 1,500. The efforts of Baldwin, who epitomized the entrepreneurial engineer of nineteenth-century America, helped lay the foundation for the railroad revolution that later swept through the United States.

The company that Baldwin founded, the Baldwin Locomotive Works, became one of the world's great industrial giants. Yet despite its experimentation with steam turbines and diesel engines after 1939, the company never was able to make a satisfactory transition from steam and was eventually put out of business by two newcomers, General Motors and General Electric.