

Howard Pyle: Imagining an American School of Art. By JILL P. MAY and ROBERT E. MAY. (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2011. 288 pp. Illustrations, notes, index. \$45.)

Once upon a time, the latest book illustrated by Howard Pyle (1853–1910) was on every American child's wish list. In the meantime, youngsters could enjoy his vivid portrayals of history and legend in the pages of *St. Nicholas*, *Everybody's*, *Collier's*, *Century*, *Scribner's*, and *Harper's* magazines. Though not a household name today, Pyle was the preeminent illustrator of the Gilded Age, and his visual interpretations of the American Revolution, Robin Hood and his Merry Men, the Knights of the Round Table, and a motley crew of pirates were indelibly printed on the imaginations of several generations. Now a new book published in conjunction with the centenary of Howard Pyle's death has rediscovered this forgotten icon of the popular culture. The subject is custom-made for authors Jill P. May, professor of literacy and language, and Robert E. May, professor of history (both at Purdue University), who bring to this work their expertise in fields beyond the history of art. This is not a coffee-table book but the first extensively documented biography of Howard Pyle. The authors combed through numerous archives and museum collections and wove their findings into a fluent narrative that documents Pyle's personal life and his career as an illustrator, author, and teacher. The frequent use of quotations from letters re-creates the intimate conversations between Pyle and his wide circle of colleagues and students, revealing the artist's exuberant personality and manic energy.

In the golden age of American illustration, Pyle was the mentor with the Midas touch. As the first teacher of illustration at Drexel Institute of Art, Science, and Industry in Philadelphia and his own school in the Brandywine River valley outside of Wilmington, he launched the careers of dozens of successful illustrators, among whom N. C. Wyeth, Frank Schoonover, Maxfield Parrish, Jessie Willcox Smith, Elizabeth Shippen Green, and Violet Oakley are perhaps the most well known. But according to May and May, Pyle had grander ambitions for his school; he believed that his training would produce a distinctly "American" style of art that would rival the great European traditions. The authors trace the nationalistic fervor that motivated Pyle from the Civil War through the emergence of the United States as an imperial power at the beginning of the twentieth century. Pyle developed relationships with Woodrow Wilson and Teddy Roosevelt, participated in the latter's presidential election campaign, and shifted from storyteller to social reformer to support the Progressive movement. One of the more fascinating additions to Pyle's biography is the importance of Swedenborgianism to his spiritual life, a subject he explored with the writer William Dean Howells.

Although he did not realize his dream of founding a national style, the authors point out that "over time, Pyle's artistic values seeped into film, comic

books, children's illustrations, and other contemporary visual arts" (200). The "romantic realism" of Pyle's compositions, with their historically accurate costumes and settings, were used as models for the art direction of Hollywood movies from *Robin Hood* (1938) to *Pirates of the Caribbean* (2006). Pyle continues to inspire award-winning children's book illustrators, who see themselves as the heirs of his tradition.

May and May have made an important contribution to the scholarship on American art in the late nineteenth century. This highly readable book is likely to be the definitive biography on Howard Pyle for some time to come.

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Teenie Harris, Photographer: Image, Memory, History. By CHERYL FINLEY, LAURENCE GLASCO, and JOE W. TROTTER. (Pittsburgh: Carnegie Museum of Art, 2011. 208 pp. Illustrations, notes, select bibliography, index. Cloth, \$55; paper, \$24.95.)

Charles "Teenie" Harris (1908–98) is one of the most significant photographers of twentieth-century culture and life in Pittsburgh. The charismatic and handsome Harris was a well-known figure both in Pittsburgh's Hill District, where he resided for most of his life, and in the city at large. Self-trained, Harris spent over a half century documenting primarily black residents and community happenings in his neighborhood. He worked as a photojournalist for the *Pittsburgh Courier* (a nationally circulating black newspaper), ran a studio, and served as photographer-for-hire for local events. By the time of his death, he had accumulated roughly eighty thousand negatives, primarily of black life in the Hill District. According to historian Laurence Glasco, Harris's archive may be the largest collection of a single black community in the world.

In this beautiful catalogue of the Carnegie Museum of Art's retrospective exhibition *Teenie Harris, Photographer: An American Story* (October 29, 2011–April 7, 2012), art historian Cheryl Finley and historians Joe W. Trotter and Laurence Glasco combine select photographs from the exhibit with essays offering important context about the photographer and the city he loved. Image and word combine to offer a rich tapestry of Harris, Pittsburgh's twentieth-century cultural and social history, and the evolution of its black population. Glasco's essay offers a cultural history of the Hill District through the life of the photographer. Trotter provides insightful analysis of the economic, social, and political history of black Pittsburghers. Finley provides close readings of images from Harris's archive, placing these works within a larger history of American, black American, and African diasporic documentary photography. Together, the essays provide important biographical details about Harris. More importantly,