HEATRE was the most important element of popular culture in Pittsburgh through the 1880s; and it catered to the working class, presenting mostly melodramas. In this flourishing theatrical climate, Pittsburghers also patronized the popular panorama and cyclorama. The panorama offered sentiment, humor, and pathos, and it was enormously successful, especially at mid-century. Later, in 1887, Pittsburgh established its own "permanent panorama" — known as a cyclorama — which became the most talked about entertainment of its day.¹

Panoramas were long, painted strips of canvas, ranging from 300 to about 3000 feet, wrapped around two upright spindles to be slowly unrolled before an audience. They commonly depicted landscapes, battles, nautical and religious scenes, and emphasized high drama and pageantry. Behind them was a melodramatic fervor that borrowed its concept of morality, of heroes and villains, from the popular stage. They served an educational as well as an entertainment function, teaching geography, history, and religion. They represented a more respectable alternative to what society viewed as the corrupting influence of the theatre on the American moral fibre.²

This article began as a research project under the direction of David Wilkins at the Frick Fine Arts Department, University of Pittsburgh. I owe both Professor Wilkins and the Department my thanks for their continuing support of my work. I am also indebted to Henry Adams, Samuel Sosland Curator of American Art at the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City, for his editing assistance.—J.M.

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² Marsh, "Drama and Spectacle," 587-88.
Because of stiff competition, especially in the 1840s, promoters of panoramas had to be great publicists, sensitive to the news and fashions of the day. The best advertised the novelty of their panoramas with skillful semantics, emphasizing extreme size, verisimilitude, mechanical variation, or even the great risk incurred by artists while creating the works. The quality of painting, however, usually fell far below academic standards. As in stage sets, the artists concentrated on strength of gesture and broad design so that the panoramas worked effectively at a distance. They typically functioned more as backdrops for dramatic performances than as significant aesthetic experiences.¹

“Performances” included piano music, commentary, and printed programs, and often lasted several hours. Sometimes musicians composed popular tunes especially for the events. The delineator, or narrator, played the most important role in the presentations, expounding upon the panorama’s lofty moral purpose, while embellishing the drama through narrative, description, and comic relief.⁴ One reviewer explained:

... As the canvas rolls by, unfolding to our view alps and oceans, cathedrals and battles, coronations, conflagrations, volcanic eruptions, etc., we hear, in the pauses of a cracked piano, the voice of the showman, as of one crying in the wilderness, who tells us all about the representations, with a good deal of pleasant information. ...⁵

A panorama boom occurred in Pittsburgh from 1848 to 1851 when the city saw its first and most celebrated panoramas. Some fifteen delineators, both famous and obscure, performed in these four years, exhibiting a melange of subjects which reveals much about national taste and Pittsburgh audiences of the nineteenth century. Samuel Hudson’s Panorama of the Hudson River, The Great Serial Panorama of Mexico by an artist known only as Donnavan, Benjamin Russell’s A Voyage Round the World, Henry Cheever Pratt’s Panorama of Paradise Lost, and David Blythe’s Great Panoramic Sketches of the Allegheny Mountains provide a provocative and representative sampling of what Pittsburghers had the opportunity to see.⁶

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³ Marsh, “Captain E. C. Williams,” 293.
⁴ Ibid., 289.
⁵ “Editor’s Table,” The Southern Literary Messenger 28 (Aug. 1859): 151.
⁶ Eleven panoramas exist in America today. Because they were considered popular, not fine, art, they were readily destroyed. Panoramas that came to Pittsburgh between 1848 and 1851:

1848 February 14-March 3: Hudson’s Panorama of the Hudson River
April 8-19: Donnavan’s Great Serial Panorama of Mexico
August 12-25: Hudson’s Panorama of the Hudson River
In Pittsburgh these early panoramas established a genre which eventually culminated in the establishment of a “permanent panorama,” or cyclorama, in the city. The cyclorama differed from the panorama in that its canvas strip adhered to the walls of a circular building and did not move. Instead, the spectator circled around it to achieve an illusory effect similar to its moving counterpart. In the late 1880s, a cyclorama recreating the battle of Gettysburg was housed in a rotunda on Pittsburgh’s North Side.

The art form that eventually became the panorama actually originated as a cyclorama. Robert Barker, a Scot, patented the cyclorama in 1787; the first example, called La Nature Coup d’Oeil, depicted views of Edinburgh and received wide acclaim. Eight years later William Winstanley brought a cyclorama to America. In a New York rotunda, he exhibited scenes of Westminster, London, after prints of Barker’s cyclorama of the same name. By the early nineteenth century, city view cycloramas of Charleston (1797), Jerusalem (1802), and Alexandria (1804) among others had come to New York. John Vanderlyn painted the most stylistically accomplished cyclorama of the early nineteenth century, the Palace and Gardens of Versailles.¹

Because the cyclorama necessitated a large round exhibition hall and relied on a substantial urban population to fill the hall day after day, as its novelty wore off, it became less and less profitable. The panorama solved some of these problems. It was portable and could be taken on rural circuits for exhibition in any kind of hall; the earliest known example, whose subject was The South Bank of the

Thames, dates to 1829. By the late 1840s, the panorama was: "... like measles, a possibility anywhere." It arrived in Pittsburgh in 1848. Samuel A. Hudson’s Panorama of the Hudson River was among the earliest of several scenic “newsreels” of the 1840s and 1850s to tour the United States, and the first panorama to come to Pittsburgh. Opening February 14, 1848, it claimed to be:

... painted on 12,000 feet of canvas, representing every city, town and landing on both sides from New York Bay to the mouth of the Mohawk River. ...

After a somewhat disappointing opening night, the new panoramic form won its way to favor. Due to popular demand, Hudson’s exhibition remained in Pittsburgh until March 3. It returned from August 12 to 25 to play to full houses.

Hudson himself served as the delineator, offering Pittburghers an alluring glimpse into little-known territory and exploiting the prevailing mood of American manifest destiny. The river in Hudson’s painting probably functioned as a metaphor of progress, creating order out of the wilderness. Time appeared to flow with the current, leading onward to a glorious American future.

In addition to impressing his Pittsburgh viewers with the grandeur of American scenery, Hudson also entertained them with episodes from the lives of the legendary Rip Van Winkle, Hendrick Hudson, and other literary and historical figures of the Hudson River area. Like such contemporary painters as Thomas Cole and John Quidor, Hudson drew on the work of the Knickerbocker writers, Washington Irving, William Cullen Bryant, and James Fenimore Cooper, to endow the American landscape with new, American literary associations. He also catered to the desire of Pittburghers for exciting narrative, and undoubtedly held their interest through dramatic enhancement of his subject.

Hudson’s panorama has been lost or destroyed, and little is known about his career, except that he was originally a merchant tailor by trade. Many painters were amateur artists but shrewd businessmen, and they often met with greater commercial success than professional

8 John Francis McDermott, The Lost Panoramas of the Mississippi (Chicago, 1958), 6-7; Marsh, "Captain E. C. Williams," 290.
9 Pittsburgh Gazette, Feb. 14, 1848.
10 Pittsburgh Gazette, Feb. 17, 1848; Aug. 11, 1848.
painters, who showed more concern for aesthetic issues. We do know that Hudson painted a second panorama, this one of the Mississippi (now lost). Its opening scene took place in Pittsburgh at the head of the Ohio; Hudson probably sketched it during his Hudson panorama exhibition here in 1848.\footnote{12}

We can get some idea of what his Panorama of the Hudson looked like by considering the one surviving contemporaneous river panorama, John J. Egan’s Panorama of the Mississippi River, c. 1850 (Fig. 1). The archaeologist Montrose Dickson had made open-air sketches of the Mississippi while conducting a survey of the Indian mounds along the river, and, in the spirit of George Catlin, commissioned Egan to record Mississippi history by painting a panorama from the sketches. Egan, however, took dramatic license and his final panorama became an eclectic composition of varying motifs — cliffs inscribed with pictographs, squatters pursued by wolves, and even a view of the Rocky Mountains, a subject as extraneous to the river as it was to his theme.\footnote{13}

\begin{footnotes}
\item[12] Hedgbeth, 34; McDermott, 170-72.
\end{footnotes}
Dickeson himself delineated the performance, which included a display of Indian artifacts, original music, and special effects, such as confetti, to imitate snow. It was common to expand the panorama's performance so that it became a multi-media experience. Hudson's *Hudson River* panorama may have been similarly expanded in presentation.

Dickeson and Egan probably based their panorama on the most lucrative river panorama of the nineteenth century, painted by John Banvard, on the theme of the greatest of American rivers, the Mississippi. No longer extant, Banvard's creation was once so popular that railroads ran express trains to its exhibitions. Banvard's dramatic delineation and his extensive advertising campaign aroused the curiosity of thousands; between December 1847 and September 1848 in New York it attracted 400,000 people and earned $200,000. Banvard's success inspired a flood of Mississippi panoramas, Egan's among them, as well as panoramas of other river subjects, such as Hudson's *Panorama of the Hudson River*, which proved so popular in Pittsburgh.

The second panorama to come to Pittsburgh was Donnavan's *Great Serial Panorama of Mexico*, which appeared at Apollo Hall from April 8 to 19, 1848. The advertisements boasted:

... a stupendous painting of Mexican scenery, occupying nearly two miles of canvas... (it displayed) the entire lines of operation of Generals Taylor and Scott... the most delightful series of views ever offered... an accurate idea of that country to which the eyes of the world have recently turned... 

A soldier and prisoner in the Mexican War and author of *Adventures in Mexico*, Donnavan personally acted as delineator and received a flattering reception. His book undoubtedly helped to stir public interest, as did his firsthand account of the fighting, to which he added melodrama. A review reports that the panorama was exhibited "... to a large and highly pleased audience. ... It is an exhibition of a tasteful and refined character which all may profit as well as be amused by." After showings in Cincinnati and Pittsburgh, Donnavan took the panorama to Boston and New York.

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14 McDermott, 39-45.
15 Pittsburgh Gazette, Apr. 8, 1848; Apr. 10, 1848.
16 Pittsburgh Morning Chronicle, Apr. 8, 1848.
The panorama no longer exists, nor are there other known works by the artist. This lack of documentation suggests that Donnavan's career as a painter was brief. Yet the panorama contained those ingredients necessary to make it popular among Pittsburgh audiences: huge size (but surely not two miles), pretensions of accuracy, a historic event, and, best of all, a story of suffering that the artist had undergone. The panorama presented a subject of intense topical interest for Pittsburghers; it probably illustrated the major victories of the war that had ended just two months before the work's arrival in the city. Patriotic fervor ran strong, and the great hero of the Mexican War, Zachary Taylor, would soon be elected president. Pittsburgh audiences undoubtedly welcomed Donnavan's canvas because it appealed to their taste for nationalism, exoticism, and high drama.

The popularity of earlier panoramas of Mexico may have encouraged Donnavan to deal with this exotic locale. Englishman William Bullock had created a famous Mexican panorama in 1824 which was complete with archaeological curios, including a facsimile of a Mexican cottage, complete with a real Mexican Indian. Bullock claimed that the Indian was the first member of his race to have visited Europe since the days of Cortez. Frederick Catherwood, the British architect, also painted a celebrated panorama of the Mayan ruins of Mexico, which he exhibited in the New York Rotunda in 1838.18

Benjamin Russell's *A Voyage Round the World* is the one extant panorama that came to Pittsburgh in these early years and the only nautical panorama to survive in America (Fig. 2). With great accuracy it portrays a whaling voyage from New Bedford, Massachusetts, across the seven seas. It remains a unique document of the whaling industry in the nineteenth century.19

Russell himself had embarked upon such a voyage from 1841 to 1844 to pay off debts. Born and raised in New Bedford, he had been employed in various capacities in whaling and thus had some expertise when he joined the crew of the *Kutusoff*. Though he was self-taught, he had some artistic experience painting ships' portraits.20

At sea, Russell made hundreds of sketches from which he later designed the panorama. He commissioned a house painter, Caleb Purrington, to help him paint the half-mile-long canvas. Purrington's hand may account for the uneven quality of the panorama, but this

19 Marsh, "Drama and Spectacle," 583.
20 Hedgbeth, 100-01.
Fig. 2. Section of Benjamin Russell's A Voyage Round the World, c. 1850
(courtesy, The Whaling Museum, New Bedford, Massachusetts)
did not detract from the success of the performance as a whole.\textsuperscript{21}

Audiences from Boston to St. Louis hailed the panorama for its drama, its veracity, and the opportunity it offered to visit exotic locales. In Pittsburgh Russell exhibited his work at Apollo Hall from February 1 to 25, 1850. He advertised that it "... furnishes one of the most exciting and novel exhibitions ever brought before the public."\textsuperscript{22} Pittsburghers agreed. One reviewer reported:

... [it] is one of the most beautiful we have ever seen — without ever moving from their seats, the spectators, in imagination, can start at New Bedford on a whaling voyage — visit foreign lands — and take a peep at the tomb of Napoleon — all for twenty-five cents. Who would not go?\textsuperscript{21}

Another proclaimed:

This fine work of art ... is well worth the attention of the lovers of adventure. The perils and pleasures of ocean life are here represented in the most vivid manner. The artist, Mr. Russell, has drawn the scenes from nature, having spent four years in the midst, for this express purpose. ...\textsuperscript{24}

The panorama offered Pittsburghers an accurate portrayal of harpooning and processing sperm whales while it also emphasized the perils of such work by documenting storms and other catastrophes. Many actual vessels can be identified in it. The painting also provided views of tropical island life, such as the scenes of Hucheina in the Society Islands, where Russell depicted natives gathering coconuts, paddling in wooden boats, and swinging on ropes over water. He even included a portrait of the island queen, as seen through the door of her thatched hut.\textsuperscript{25}

Russell may have been influenced in his choice of themes by Herman Melville's literature about the South Seas. Pittsburghers astutely recognized that "Those who have feasted their imaginations with Melville's enchanting descriptions of the sunny isles of the South can gratify their eyes with a graphic delineation of the same scenes upon canvas."\textsuperscript{26} Both Russell and Melville expressed the themes of isolation, jeopardy, and the thrill of the high seas.\textsuperscript{27}

As Pittsburghers' guide through this adventure, Russell expounded upon the dangers and the exoticism he had encountered. One critic

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{21} Ibid., 102.
  \item \textsuperscript{22} Pittsburgh Gazette, Feb. 1, 1850.
  \item \textsuperscript{23} Ibid., 3.
  \item \textsuperscript{24} Pittsburgh Gazette, Feb. 4, 1850.
  \item \textsuperscript{25} Hedgbeth, 118-49.
  \item \textsuperscript{26} Pittsburgh Gazette, Feb. 7, 1850.
\end{itemize}
commented, "Mr. Russell's explanatory remarks are highly entertain-
ing." 28 His vivid dramatization helped make the performance a great success. "During his stay in the city Mr. Russell has exhibited [the panorama] to thousands, and we have heard but one voice respecting it — that of praise." 29

Not long after Russell's triumph, two panoramas came to Pittsburgh in November 1851. Henry Cheever Pratt painted the first to be shown:

The Great Original Panorama of Eden, illustrative of Milton's Paradise; representing the Botany of the Globe, with three groups of Adam and Eve, the size of life . . . pronounced by all the best panorama in the world.10

Reviewers assented, reporting "... the thousands who . . . witnessed it during its stay . . . declared it . . . superior to all panoramas ever before exhibited in this city." 31

In spite of the seemingly literary nature of this subject, Pratt's panorama received much attention, and the Atheneum hosted it for a full two weeks, November 7-21, 1851. The delineator, possibly Pratt, presented its Miltonian theme as a metaphor for the nation's destiny. According to evangelical revivalists of the time, America represented the new Eden, though one menaced by industrialization which threatened to destroy the sacred wilderness and bring about a fall of the American Adam.12 Pittburghers could identify with this theme,

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28 Pittsburgh Gazette, Feb. 7, 1850.
29 Pittsburgh Gazette, Feb. 14, 1850.
30 Pittsburgh Gazette, Nov. 12, 1851.
32 Pratt revived his panorama after the Civil War, for its theme seemed especially appropriate for the spirit of the times. It appeared at the Pittsburgh Concert Hall from May 12 to 25, 1865, with a more elaborate advertisement. The reviews indicate that it captured an even larger and more receptive audience. Its promoters subtitled it The Great Rebellion in Heaven: The War of Angels, the Fall of Satan and the Fall of Man, and claimed its "... 63 splendid tableaux paintings were exhibited in London for 280 consecutive days to more than half a million people . . . and the entire court of Buckingham Palace, upon which her Majesty . . . presented him with a magnificent diamond ring."

A Pittsburgh review of 1865 applauded it as "... one of the finest things it has ever been our lot to witness. . . . The last scene, which represents Adam and Eve clothed in naked majesty divine is beyond description the best thing we have ever witnessed. . . . We doubt whether the concert hall will hold all the people who will endeavor to gain admittance this evening." Pittsburgh Gazette, May 17, 1865; Pittsburgh Commercial, May 17, 1865; R. W. B. Lewis, The American Adam: Innocence, Tragedy, and Tradition in the Nineteenth Century (Chicago, 1955); Leo Marx, The Machine in the Garden: Technology and Pastoral Ideals in America (New York, 1965); Barbara Novak, Nature and Culture: American Landscape and Painting (New York, 1980), 17.
for industrialization was already rapidly occurring along the three rivers. The panorama both preached a deep moral lesson and provided the thrill of seeing nude bodies and scenes of hell. Its clear dichotomy of good and evil would have been appealing.

The panorama does not survive, but fortunately Pratt's career is well-documented. Pratt frequently represented literary themes, and his engraved View of the White Mountains after the Land Slide (1828) illustrates a romantic tale, A Bridal in the Early Settlements which later prompted Nathaniel Hawthorne to write The Ambitious Stranger. His subjects suggest that Pratt was engaged in a search for the picturesque and the sublime in the American landscape, a trend popularized by Thomas Cole and treated by Samuel Morse, under whom Pratt had studied. Morse's rare landscapes, such as Allegorical Landscape of New York University, c. 1835 (New York Historical Society), must have affected Pratt, for they portray picturesque sites in the grand manner and employ a Claudian vocabulary to make moralizing statements about American culture.  

In addition, Pratt took a sketching trip through New England with Cole himself in 1828, and the two remained close friends. Cole's Expulsion from the Garden of Eden, 1827 (Museum of Fine Arts, Boston), probably influenced the Biblical theme and moralizing tone of Pratt's panorama. Cole died in 1848, and the panorama Pratt apparently made soon afterwards may well have served as a tribute to his friend.  

David Blythe's Great Panoramic Sketches of the Allegheny Mountains, c. 1851, was the first panorama shown in Pittsburgh which was painted by an artist now accorded major rank in histories of American art. It arrived at Philo Hall, however, at the same time as Pratt's successful run of Paradise Lost and a performance of the wildly popular Swedish opera star, Jenny Lind, and it could not withstand the competition. Moreover, Blythe himself acted as delineator, and he evidently could not provide the drama and sensationalism Pittsburghers demanded. An inadequate advertising campaign contributed to Blythe's failure and the exhibition closed after only one week.


(November 15-22). The advertisement read, "Something entirely new and different in design, execution and arrangement from anything hitherto offered to the public... painted by our talented townsman, Blythe." Although the promise of novelty may have attracted Pittsburghers, the ad was smaller and less effective than Pratt's promotional efforts. Blythe offered only regional diversions, without pageantry and certainly without nudity; the papers gave him faint praise.

The Great Panoramic Sketches of the Allegheny Mountains no longer exists, but Blythe scholars have discovered a wealth of documentation concerning its creation and demise. Blythe painted the panorama in 1850-51, while still a relatively unknown artist who hoped to establish himself with this ambitious project. Because of a cash shortage, the canvas measured a mere 300 feet and was noticeably shorter than most others on the circuit. The panorama illustrated scenes such as Monticello, Washington's historic route through Cumberland, and Ligonier, with General St. Clair posed in front of an old log tavern stand. Audiences talked most about Blythe's duck trick. Legend claims that Blythe hid a tank of water filled with ducks in front of the panorama so that at the appropriate moment the ducks would swim and dive for food; this added a surprising new realism to the event. Images of everyday life, filled with local color, created an indisputably provincial flavor that might have appealed to Pittsburgh viewers accustomed to popular theatre. However, Blythe did not make his performance spectacular enough or long enough to attract many patrons.

After testing out the panorama in Cumberland, Winchester, Baltimore, and Pittsburgh, with modest success at the first three stops, Blythe had hoped to move on to New York, Boston, and London. Patrick Nel had delineated the show, but upon reaching Pittsburgh, Blythe, hoping for greater acclamation than the panorama had received thus far, insisted he personally give the commentary. His lack of embellishment drove audiences away; this failure, combined with his weak advertising campaign and heavy competition, proved fatal. Pittsburgh patronage dwindled, and financial disaster quickly followed. After a few attempts at revival, the panorama was cut into pieces and used for stage sets at Trimble's Variety Show.

By the mid-1850s the novelty of the panorama had diminished in

35 Pittsburgh Gazette, Nov. 15, 1851; Nov. 21, 1851.
Pittsburgh, but exhibitions still came to the city intermittently for another thirty years and were well-received. This fairly steady demand eventually culminated in the establishment of Pittsburgh's own permanent — but short lived — cyclorama, sponsored by local investors and by entrepreneurs from Chicago and San Francisco. In 1887, at the studio of Pierpoint and Gross in Englewood, Illinois, a team of eight artists created a battle of Gettysburg that was briefly the theatrical sensation of Pittsburgh. A specially constructed rotunda housed the cyclorama at Beech and Irwin Streets on the North Side (Fig. 3).

A press review May 28, 1887, announced the cyclorama's opening on June 14. It described in minute detail the mechanical ingenuity of the exhibition, which was complete with electric lighting, an iron truss roof, and an observation platform that could hold 250 people. Fence posts, broken cannons, and naturalistically colored wax

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*Fig. 3. Pittsburgh Cyclorama Company, The Battle of Gettysburg (program illustration, 1887, Carnegie Library, Pittsburgh)*
figures of dying soldiers spattered with red paint lay around the panorama's edge to help make spectators feel as if they were actually witnessing the battle. The building and canvas cost investors an awesome $200,000 which must have impressed potential Pittsburgh patrons.\(^\text{17}\)

Near opening day, promoters placed prominent ads in all of the local papers, and audiences hurried to see the cyclorama in all of its melodramatic glory. The *Pittsburgh Commercial Gazette* described it as "... the most successful effort ever made to portray with historic and scenic fidelity such a gripping scene." \(^\text{38}\)

It is not known whether the cyclorama had a delineator, but an elaborate sixty-page program accompanied the exhibition so that the spectator could follow the painted narrative. The program provided a comprehensive history of the battle, rosters of the Federal and Confederate armies, and a short explanation of the cyclorama. The battle represented the third day's fight, when Pickett's division made its foolhardy charge and the Union triumphed; historians consider this to be the turning point of the Civil War. The highlights included soldiers knee-deep in wheat at the death line, surgeons at work on the wounded, and Lee watching Pickett's progress with an anxious eye.\(^\text{39}\)

Eight artists worked on the cyclorama: E. W. Deming, Thadeus Welch, O. D. Grover, Albert G. Reinhart, John O. Anderson, C. H. Collins, A. J. Austen, and John Twachtman.\(^\text{40}\) They came from a variety of artistic traditions, ranging from commercial hackwork to advanced Impressionist styles. All of them struggled financially in the late 1880s, or they would not have stooped to team-paint a cyclorama, just as the novelty wore thin. Several of them had studied abroad, in Paris and in Munich. Undoubtedly they rendered the figures of the *Battle of Gettysburg* in a tightly-executed and accomplished academic mode.

Deming and Welch painted primarily Indian subjects. Known for his neoclassical murals, Grover contributed the scene of doctors operating.\(^\text{41}\) Albert G. Reinhart came from an artistic Pittsburgh family.

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\(^{37}\) *The Alleghenian*, May 28, 1887.

\(^{38}\) *Pittsburgh Commercial Gazette*, June 14, 1887.

\(^{39}\) *The Battle of Gettysburg as Exhibited by the Pittsburgh Cyclorama Company* (Pittsburgh, c. 1887), Carnegie Library, Pittsburgh.


His brother, Charles Stanley Reinhart, worked as a successful illustrator for several New York-based magazines and then moved to Paris where he concentrated on Salon paintings which Henry James praised. A newspaper account optimistically predicted of Albert that "... the young Pittsburger's energy and talent are of an order that will long place him abreast of his older brother [Charles]. His special attention is given to figure painting." This prediction, however, was not fulfilled. Albert painted a group of Confederate prisoners and a portrait of General Hayes in the cyclorama.

Of the eight, John Twachtman has emerged as the only artist of real stature. Twachtman accepted the cyclorama commission when he needed money to go abroad. He is generally recognized as the most innovative of American Impressionists. During his early years in Europe he worked in a tight, precise style, but in the mid-1880s he broke with academic convention to create a new, personal idiom. His mature work, characterized by loose, evocative brushwork and delicate tonalities, boldly subordinated form to atmospheric effects. Appropriately, Twachtman painted the skies, illuminated by bombs and artillery, in the Pittsburgh painting. His rapid stroke and subtle color sense would have been particularly suitable for these areas.

While no reproductions of the Gettysburg cyclorama have been located, one can get a good idea of what it must have looked like by examining its source, Paul Philippoteaux's *Battle of Gettysburg* cyclorama. Philippoteaux executed his battle in four versions, two of which survive.

Philippoteaux specialized in panoramas of great battles; he and his assistants spent three years, from 1881 to 1884, creating the original 24 x 365 foot cyclorama of Gettysburg. Their methods revolutionized

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*Western Art* (Denver, 1977), 54, 232; R. W. Holbrook, "An Important Quartet of Mural Paintings," *Brush and Pencil* 11 (Oct. 1902): 104-5; Maude I. G. Oliver, "Studio Talk," *International Studio* 26 (1905): 267; Pittsburgh *Chronicle-Telegram*, June 14, 1887. I have looked for information on Anderson, Collins, and Austen, but have found nothing. They may have been local Chicago painters, but the Chicago Historical Society has no record of them.


44 The original cyclorama is currently for sale at the Signature Fine Arts Gallery, Newport Beach, California, and is appraised at over three million dollars. The second version now stands at Gettysburg.
the production of panoramas. In 1881 Philippoteaux went to Gettysburg to sketch the battlefields and interview eyewitnesses of Pickett's charge. He also hired a photographer to shoot a series of panoramic views of the topography. This photographic technique, as described in an 1886 *Scientific American*, made "the perspective, aerial and linear, beyond criticism." 45

Philippoteaux's *Battle of Gettysburg* met much success and was widely imitated. It was first exhibited in 1885, when the artists and promoters of the Pittsburgh cyclorama could have seen it. 46 The team of Twachtman, *et al.*, employed its new photographic method as well as its scale and the emphasis on Pickett's charge. They hoped that the Pittsburgh cyclorama would receive equal acclaim, but interest in cycloramas died out sooner than expected, and the Pittsburgh *Battle of Gettysburg* met a cruel fate.

In November of 1887 the *Alleghenian* reported that "the cyclorama still remains the great attraction of its day," but by August of 1888 the cyclorama building housed a steam laundry. After successive trials as a dance academy and skating rink, the rotunda was closed and the canvas put up for auction in 1890; no one placed a bid. The building itself was demolished in the 1920s. 47

As the demise of this cyclorama suggests, the panoramic form fell out of vogue in Pittsburgh during the 1880s. By then, taste in painting had shifted from vastness to intimacy, and the photograph had replaced painting as a means of documentation. Pittsburghers demanded more intellectually and technically sophisticated entertainment, and they supported a variety of theatrical experiences in the 1890s, when the Nixon and Alvin theatres were built. In the early twentieth century, Pittsburgh became the first city in the world to house an all motion picture theatre at Fifth and Smithfield. 48 The silent film took over many of the roles of the panorama, presenting the contemporary form of moving pictures with piano accompaniment. The panorama had served as a partial bridge between the stage and screen. In the history of popular entertainment in nineteenth-century Pittsburgh, the panorama and the cyclorama should not be forgotten.

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46 Information provided by Christine Fidell, Signature Fine Arts Gallery.
