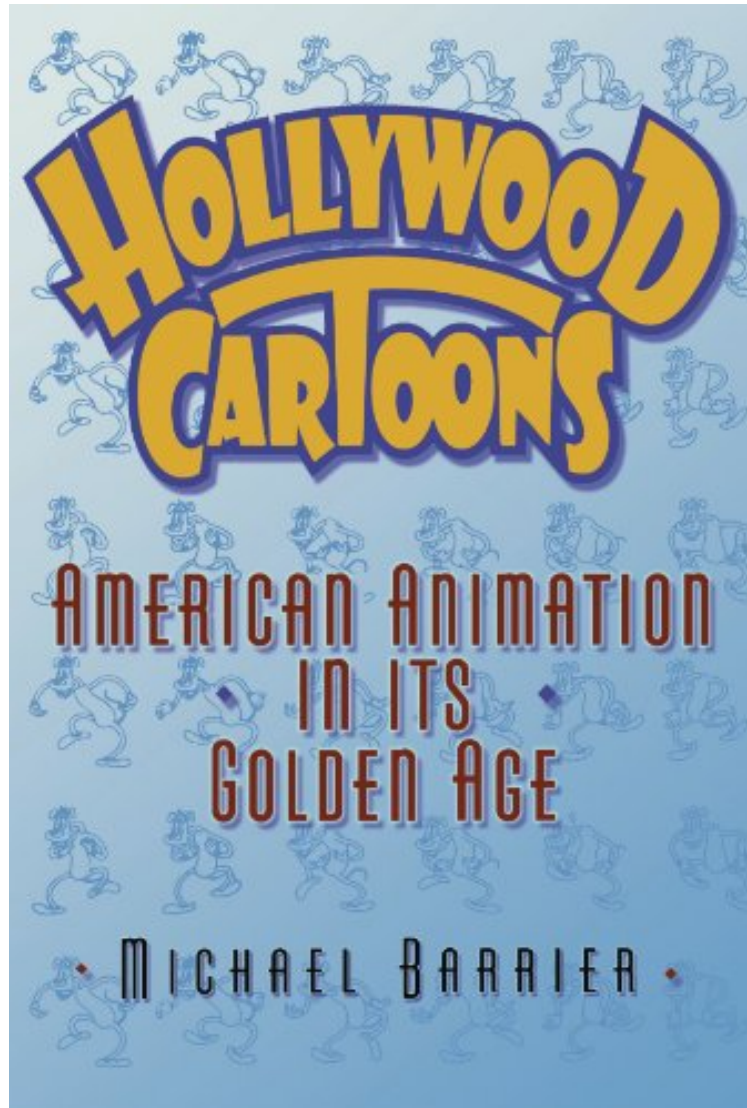


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## Hollywood Cartoons: American Animation in Its Golden Age

*Michael Barrier*

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**Michael Barrier : Hollywood Cartoons: American Animation in Its Golden Age** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Hollywood Cartoons: American Animation in Its Golden Age:

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. The Best Narrative on Animation History By V Michael Barrier really does his homework when it comes to researching the history of animation. This is a result of years of dedicated research. While it is true that it talks more about Disney than the other studios, this shouldn't be surprising since

Disney has the best track record for preserving their history than the other studios have and they've enjoyed a longer legacy as well. Another factor is that Barrier himself said that he was only able to use only a fraction of the most interesting information he had. Barrier's writing is filled with facts that aren't found anywhere else all in a smooth and engaging narrative, complete with plenty of footnotes. Much of the information comes from interviews that Barrier conducted over the years with hundreds of people who worked in the industry. Some of these are available on his website. He posts more of them from time to time. This is a must read for the animation enthusiast.

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. The Story Of Cartoons As Told By Animation's Leading Historian By John McElwee There is not a better or more complete survey of American cartoons on the market. Michael Barrier brings a lifetime's gather of information and interviews to this definitive telling of animation's Classic Era history. As reference or pure enjoyment, "Hollywood Cartoons" is without peer. It is an absolute must for bookshelves of anyone who grew up with cartoons, whether in theaters, on TV, or as home video collections. As to the latter, I'd propose "Hollywood Cartoons" as ideal companion for watching Looney Tunes on DVD, or Popeye, the Disney classics --- whatever your choice. Michael Barrier gives a fullest background and inside account of how these cartoons were made and the artists in back of them, his the final word on animation in its glory day.

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Hollywood Cartoons is Excellent. By P. Neuhaus Hollywood Cartoons is an outstanding piece of work. Barrier is both thorough and opinionated -- which I consider a good thing. If you're writing a nonfiction book, don't just give me the facts, tell me what you think. "Cartoons" was one of the sources for my own book, An Animation Miscellany. I have dozens of books on classic hand-drawn animation and only a few are worthy of being used for research. Hollywood Cartoons is on that short list.

In *Hollywood Cartoons*, Michael Barrier takes us on a glorious guided tour of American animation in the 1930s, '40s, and '50s, to meet the legendary artists and entrepreneurs who created Bugs Bunny, Betty Boop, Mickey Mouse, Wile E. Coyote, Donald Duck, Tom and Jerry, and many other cartoon favorites. Beginning with black-and-white silent cartoons, Barrier offers an insightful account, taking us inside early New York studios and such Hollywood giants as Disney, Warner Bros., and MGM. Barrier excels at illuminating the creative side of animation--revealing how stories are put together, how animators develop a character, how technical innovations enhance the "realism" of cartoons. Here too are colorful portraits of the giants of the field, from Walt and Roy Disney and their animators, to Bill Hanna and Joe Barbera. Based on hundreds of interviews with veteran animators, *Hollywood Cartoons* gives us the definitive inside look at this colorful era and at the creative process behind these marvelous cartoons.

From *Publishers Weekly* The fruit of exhaustive research, from interviews with more than 200 cartoon creators to the unearthing of piles of personal papers, dusty artwork and even hectographed memos from the 1930s, this long-awaited survey of American animation has taken Barrier (during the 1960s, the editor and publisher of *Funnyworld*, a periodical devoted to animation) more than 25 years to write. Barrier has screened thousands of films, including hundreds of silent pictures and "almost all the short sound cartoons produced for theatrical release by the Disney, Harmon-Ising, Schlesinger, Warner Bros., MGM, UPA, and Iwerks studios," and his command of the material is astounding. He covers everything from creative character development to artistic influences, budget limitations, box office returns and technological advances such as the introduction of Xerox copiers to transfer pencil drawings directly as black lines, eliminating the inking stage. In addition to profiles of major talents, Barrier presents glimpses of Disney's earliest sketches, the insights of film critics, studio accountants and even psychologist Bruno Bettelheim, as well as countless anecdotes, such as one artist's memory of Disney's new 1939 air-conditioned Burbank studio, where "any animator could pick up his phone and call the coffee shop and have a soda delivered, or hot coffee, hot chocolate, ice cream Anything. And a waiter would come running down the hall, with service right to your room." This cartoon cornucopia is both a delightful entertainment and a serious study, easily ranking as the definitive overview of the animation industry's accomplishments. In addition to the archival art and rare photos is a nice bonus of several flip-book sequences written into the page corners. Copyright 1999 Reed Business Information, Inc.

From *Library Journal* Based on archival research and hundreds of interviews, this volume provides a comprehensive survey of American animation up to the late 1960s. An authority on film cartoons, Barrier traces the development of such studios as Disney, Warner Brothers, and MGM. His cast of characters includes animators like Max Fleischer, Tex Avery, Chuck Jones, and Bill Hanna and Joe Barbera. By extension, it includes Bugs Bunny, Mickey Mouse, Porky Pig, Gerald McBoing Boing, and a host of other wondrous creations. Barrier's account reveals the interplay between studio politics, technical innovation, and the business side of Hollywood. The highly readable result is neither weighted down with scholarly discourse nor demeaned by trivial anecdotes. In much the same way that David A. Cook's *A History of Narrative Film* (Norton, 1996) covers cinema as a whole, *Hollywood Cartoons* might well become the standard survey in its area. All libraries should consider for purchase. Neal Baker, Earlham Coll., Richmond, IN Copyright 1999 Reed Business Information, Inc.

From *Booklist* As animation scholar Barrier notes, the pleasures found in the best Hollywood cartoons appeal more to adults than to children. With great expertise and insight, he identifies and explains those pleasures in an informative chronicle of the cartoon industry: its early black-and-white

and silent days in New York, its move to Hollywood and sound, the pioneering feature films of Disney, and its decline in the face of changing studio economics and the rise of television. He is especially insightful about the cartoons of the 1940s, the genre's golden age, when its creators perfected the amalgam of story, character, and technique in landmark films. The fact that Barrier draws on nearly three decades' worth of interviews (200) with directors, animators, and other industry figures attests to the collaborative nature of cartoon filmmaking. Considering the colorful anecdotes he elicits from his subjects, Barrier's prose is often surprisingly prosaic. And scholarly tome or not, more illustrations would have been welcome. Even so, and although Leonard Maltin's *Of Mice and Magic* (1980) covers much the same ground in breezier fashion, libraries desiring more thorough and authoritative coverage should find Barrier's effort the definitive history of the field. Gordon Flagg