

SMALL BEGINNINGS

1888	Flora Call and Elias Disney marry on Jan 1. Herbert Disney is born Dec 8.	1906	The Disney family moves to Marceline, MO.
1889	The Disney family moves to Chicago, IL.	1911	The Disney family moves to Kansas City, MO.
1890	Raymond Disney is born Dec 30.	1916	<i>Snow White</i> , starring Marguerite Clark, premieres; Walt sees it in Kansas City the following January.
1893	Roy Oliver Disney is born Jun 24.	1917	The Disney family moves back to Chicago.
1901	Walter Elias Disney is born Dec 5.		
1903	Ruth Disney is born on Dec 6.		

On New Year's Day, 1888, Flora Call and Elias Disney married in a small town in Florida. On December 8 of the same year, their first son Herbert was born. They then moved from Florida to Chicago, where Elias took a job as a carpenter. In the years after the Disney family arrived, two more sons, Raymond and Roy, were born. Eight years later, on December 5, 1901, a fourth son was born and his name was Walter Elias Disney.

After Walt, Flora gave birth to Ruth, her fifth child and only daughter. The Disney family would stay in Chicago for only a few years as crime was on the rise. Deciding that their neighborhood was no longer a suitable place to raise a family, Elias and Flora packed up and left Illinois.

Missouri

They settled in a small town in Missouri called Marceline, which is where Walt spent the formative years of his childhood. He adored the farm his family lived on, the animals that resided there, and the trains that rolled by frequently. While he grew up, Walt cultivated an interest in drawing. Relatives encouraged Walt, including a family friend named Doc Sherwood, who paid Walt a nickel for a drawing of his horse, Rupert. A nickel was a lot of money for a kid of the 1900s and the experience helped encourage Walt to pursue art.

Business became difficult for Elias, so the family decided to sell the farm and move to Kansas City. To support his family, Elias bought two newspaper distributorships. Every morning at 3 A.M., he, Roy, and Walt got up to deliver the paper along their route. Afterward, Walt went to school, which was a struggle given how little sleep he was getting. But he met the challenge, thanks in part to the help of his teachers. He also continued to practice his drawing skills by taking art classes and by watching the editorial cartoonists at the newspaper.



While in Kansas City, Walt discovered and became fascinated by the worlds of movies and vaudeville. Soon after, Walt looked for opportunities to perform. He and a friend named Walt

Pfieffer teamed up at amateur nights, calling themselves “The Two Walts.” Additionally, during one day at school, Walt dressed up as one of his heroes, President Lincoln, and recited the Gettysburg Address from memory. The principal was so impressed that he took Walt to the other classes to give encores.

Illinois & France

A few years later, the family moved back to Chicago; Elias had sold the newspaper distributorships to become a part-owner of a jelly factory. Taking a job there, Walt continued to nurture a love for drawing. While at McKinley High School, he joined the staff of the school magazine as an artist. But by the end of his freshman year, Walt decided he wanted to take part in America’s effort in World War I. His brother Roy had already joined the Navy, but Walt was too young to do the same.



Courtesy the Walt Disney Family Foundation © Jim Smith

Undeterred, he discovered that the Red Cross needed volunteers to serve in their American Ambulance Corps. For the next 11 months, Walt drove ambulances and chauffeured various officials and dignitaries in France. During this time, he continued to hone his drawing skills by sketching designs on the ambulances and painting designs on his fellow volunteers’ jackets. He received positive feedback for his work, which motivated Walt to begin a career as an artist.

THE DAWN OF A CAREER

1919	Walt returns to Kansas City, determined to start a career as an artist.	1922	Walt’s studio, Laugh-O-gram Films, is incorporated and starts production.
1920	At Kansas City Film Ad Company, Walt is introduced to the making of animated cartoons.	1923	Laugh-O-gram Films declares bankruptcy and Walt leaves Kansas City for Hollywood.
1921	Walt sells his first theatrical animated films, the <i>Newman Laugh-O-grams</i> , to a Kansas City exhibitor.		

Returning to Kansas City, Walt’s first job was with the Pesmen-Rubin Commercial Art Studio. There, he met a young man named Ub Iwerks and the two of them quickly became friends. After they were both laid off after the holiday rush, Walt and Ub went into business together for a brief time before finding jobs at the Kansas City Film Ad Company. At this new place, Walt made a critical discovery - how to make animated cartoons. The Kansas City Film Ad Company used a form of animation called stop motion. Although Walt was intrigued by it, he was excited to try more advanced forms. So, he studied materials created by film pioneers, such as Eadweard

Muybridge and E.G. Lutz, and he created experimental films. During this process, Walt learned about a new form of animation involving cel sheets. Eventually, Walt sold the films he produced from this research to a theater chain owned by Frank Newman.

Encouraged by this success, Walt left his job and formed his own studio called Laugh-O-gram Films. Ub and a few other artists joined Walt, and they produced cartoons based on fairy tales but updated with modern gags. Unfortunately, when a client

failed to pay \$11,000 for six cartoons, Walt had to try several ideas to save his company. One such solution was a film, titled *Alice's Wonderland*, which blended live-action footage with animation. Although the film was very creative, Laugh-O-gram Films ended up declaring bankruptcy. Following his brother Roy's advice on what to do next, Walt scraped up enough money for a train ticket to Hollywood to make a new start.



Laugh-O-gram title screen, 1922. Courtesy the Walt Disney Family Foundation

HOLLYWOOD

1923	The Disney Brothers Cartoon Studios is founded.	1926	The studios move to 2719 Hyperion Avenue in Los Angeles.
1924	The Alice Comedies debut. Walt hires animators from Kansas City. Lillian Bounds begins working at the Disney Brothers Cartoon Studios.	1927	Oswald the Lucky Rabbit debuts in <i>Trolley Troubles</i> .
1925	Roy marries Edna Francis. Walt marries Lillian Bounds.	1928	Walt loses control of the Oswald character. Mickey Mouse debuts in <i>Steamboat Willie</i> .

Walt arrived in Hollywood during the summer of 1923 with forty dollars in his pocket, art supplies, and a few mismatched clothes. At the time, he thought that he had missed his chance to get into the cartoon business, as there were a number of well-established hits like *Felix the Cat* and *Out of the Inkwell*. So instead, he focused on getting a job in live-action films. But because none of the major studios had any openings for him, Walt decided to give cartoons another try.

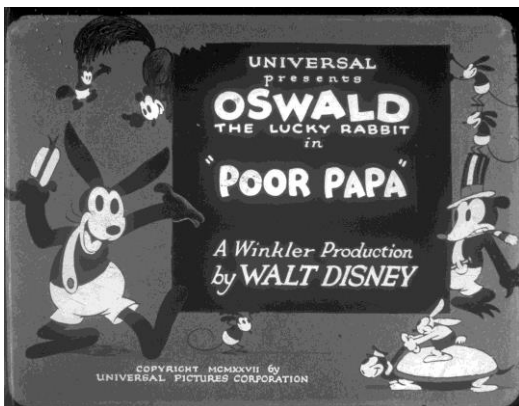
Alice Comedies

He contacted a distributor named Margaret Winkler and told her about his film, *Alice's Wonderland*. After watching it, she sent a telegram to Walt telling him that she wanted to turn it into a series. With the telegram in hand, Walt asked Roy for his help in getting a new business started. Roy agreed and he and Walt created the Disney Brothers Cartoon Studios. However, Mrs. Winkler had one important condition that Walt needed to meet. She wanted the same

actress, a little girl named Virginia Davis, to star in the new series. As Virginia was still living in Kansas City, Walt wrote a letter that asked Virginia's mother to move the family from Missouri to California. Mrs. Davis agreed, and soon production started on the first set of *Alice Comedies*.

For the first six *Alice Comedies*, Walt did all the animating, writing, and directing by himself, with Roy managing the finances and running the camera. After the first six shorts were successful, Walt was able to hire additional people. He invited some of his old Laugh-O-gram colleagues, including Ub Iwerks, to join him in California. He also hired a woman named Lillian Bounds as one of the inkers. Almost immediately, Walt was smitten with her, and they began dating.

Margaret Winkler also began dating and soon married Charles Mintz, who gradually took control of Winkler Pictures as Margaret focused on raising their family. After this change, the business relationship between the Disney Brothers Studios and Winkler Pictures became difficult. Mintz was critical of Walt, at one point telling him that he "should be wholeheartedly ashamed of himself" for the quality of work his studios produced. But they made the arrangement work - for a while.



Title Card final frame for *Poor Papa* (1927). Courtesy the Walt Disney Archives Photo Library, © Disney

Oswald the Lucky Rabbit

Meanwhile, the *Alice Comedies* continued for three and a half years, totaling 57 shorts. Near the end, Walt became interested in launching a new, all-animation series.

Universal Pictures, along with Charles Mintz, partnered with Walt to create it, but they requested that the series feature a rabbit as the star and that he be named Oswald.

In the mid-1920s, Walt and Lillian decided to get married in her home state of Idaho. Three months earlier, Roy married his longtime sweetheart, Edna Francis. A couple of years later, Oswald the Lucky Rabbit made his theatrical debut in "Trolley Troubles." He was an immediate success

and, because of Universal's range, Walt's work was being seen in bigger and more prestigious theaters than before.

As the contract with Winkler Pictures was starting to wind down in 1927, Walt and Lillian went to New York to reach a new agreement with Charles Mintz. Going into the meeting, Walt felt it was reasonable to ask for an increase in pay, considering how well Oswald was doing. He was therefore stunned when Mintz asked him to take a cut in pay or have his artists stolen from him. Beforehand, Mintz had met behind Walt's back with many of his key animators to put him in this position. Confronted with this situation, Walt faced a choice: he could either agree to Charles' terms or he could walk away. By choosing the latter, he would lose most of his staff and the Oswald character, as it was the property of Universal Pictures. After thinking it over, Walt decided to walk away, which was a gutsy move, considering Oswald was his studio's main source of income at the time.

Mickey Mouse

Determined, Walt immediately started to think about a new character. As he and Lillian took the train back to Los Angeles, Walt thought about creating a mouse named Mortimer. Upon hearing this idea, Lillian remarked that she liked the idea for a mouse, but she did not like the name. So, Walt decided to call the mouse Mickey instead.

Production soon began on the first two Mickey Mouse shorts, *Plane Crazy* and *Gallopin' Gaucho*. Unfortunately, Walt had a tough time selling them to distributors because no one had ever heard of Mickey Mouse before. Persevering, Walt embraced innovation and incorporated the novelty of synchronized sound in the third Mickey Mouse short, *Steamboat Willie*. Such a process was very expensive and difficult, involving a full orchestra and repeated attempts. But after production was complete, one theater in New York

agreed to show *Steamboat Willie* for two weeks. And Mickey Mouse became an immediate hit. After that, Walt had little trouble convincing distributors to show Mickey.



Earliest known drawings of Mickey Mouse, 1928 © Disney

Not long after, a gentleman named Kay Kamen negotiated with Walt and Roy for the merchandising rights to Mickey. After an agreement was reached, a huge assortment of Mickey Mouse merchandise washed over the country. Items ranging from watches to dolls to tricycles were all sold to eager fans. With the merchandising sales and the box office revenue, Mickey Mouse gave Walt enough money to tell new stories in creative and innovative ways.

NEW HORIZONS IN THE 1930s

1929	Release of <i>The Skeleton Dance</i> marks the launch of the Silly Symphonies.	1933	Diane Marie Disney, Walt and Lilly's first child, is born December 18.
1932	Walt produces <i>Flowers and Trees</i> , his first Technicolor cartoon. Walt wins his first two Academy Awards®, one for <i>Flowers and Trees</i> for Best Cartoon (a new category) and one for the creation of Mickey Mouse.	1934	Disney story crews begin work on a feature-length project.
		1935	Mickey Mouse cartoons are produced in Technicolor beginning with <i>The Band Concert</i> .

The Silly Symphonies

Instead of continuing to produce only Mickey cartoons, Walt decided to diversify and push the limits of innovation, which he continued to do throughout his life. A new cartoon series called the *Silly Symphonies* was created, in which there was no star character like an Oswald or a Mickey. Instead, the star was music.



Courtesy the Walt Disney Family Foundation © Cesar Rubio

In addition, Walt used this series to test new innovations, one of which was color. In 1932, Walt partnered with Technicolor for the exclusive use of their three-strip process. He debuted this innovation with a *Silly Symphony* called *Flowers and Trees*, which earned the Studios its first Academy Award®.

Another innovation was personality animation, which conveyed to an audience a character's personality by the way the character moved. One of the earliest examples of

this technique was in *Three Little Pigs*. In it, the wolf sneaks around, while the pigs prance around overconfidently.

These movements gave the audience a sense of who these characters were even without the aid of dialogue. For this short, the studios received another Academy Award.

Depth was another innovation tried out during this time. During this era, most cartoons were relatively flat, but Walt and his team wanted to give audiences a richer experience. To that end, they perfected a device called a multiplane camera. This apparatus allowed multiple layers of animation to be photographed, allowing stories to be told in a three-dimensional way. The first Disney cartoon to use the multiplane, *The Old Mill*, won another Academy Award®.

New Faces & New Challenges

During this time of innovation, Donald Duck, Goofy, and Pluto made their debuts. And Walt and Lilly's family began to grow, too. Their first daughter Diane, the co-founder of our museum, was born. Three years later, their second daughter Sharon was welcomed into the family.

However, the effects of the Great Depression were beginning to be felt at the studios. Theater owners began passing on cartoons and showing two feature-length films instead as a way to bring in bigger audiences. Seeing this trend, Walt started to think about creating a feature-length animated film.

THE MOVE TO FEATURES

1937 Walt and Lilly adopt Sharon Mae, their second daughter, in January. *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* premieres on December 21.

1938 Flora Disney, Walt's mother, dies on November 26. Walt is awarded honorary degrees by Harvard and Yale.

Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs

At the time, it was a risky idea to produce a feature-length animated film because cartoons of this era were expensive to produce, especially with all of the enhancements from Walt's



George Geopner, Character Model
Statue of Dopey, 1937. Courtesy the
Walt Disney Family Foundation
Dokey © Disney

innovations. To attempt to ensure the risk would pay off, Walt decided to make two significant investments.

The first investment was in his animators. He hired more artists to work at the studios and hired instructors to help the staff improve their skills. However, because of the available space, the atmosphere became more crowded and tumultuous. Drawing boards were set up anywhere there was a place for them and animators were practically working shoulder-to-shoulder. Ironically, however, the close quarters led to creativity, and many of the animators enjoyed it.

The second investment Walt made was in the story, since it was the foundation upon which the entire film was built. *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* was a classic battle between good and evil, with elements of romance and humor. To ensure that

all of those elements were well-depicted, Walt and his team used “storyboarding” - putting the story onto boards - to visualize the entire storyline beforehand, which was another groundbreaking innovation.

As production got underway, word got out about this project. Members of the press call it “Disney’s folly,” predicting that no audience would want to see a feature-length cartoon. But on December 21, 1937, *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* premiered at the Carthay Circle Theater in Los Angeles and was received enthusiastically by audiences. During its first release, *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* made 8 million dollars in revenue. Translated into today’s currency, the film grossed approximately 130 million dollars. Walt accurately viewed this success as a turning point.

“WE WERE IN A NEW BUSINESS”

1939 The last Silly Symphony, *The Ugly Duckling*, is released and wins the Academy Award® for Best Cartoon.

1940 *Pinocchio* opens in February and wins Academy Awards® for its music. *Fantasia* opens in November. The Walt Disney Studios completes its move to the new Burbank location

The Burbank Studio

As the 1930s transitioned into the 1940s, Walt used part of the box office revenue from *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* to create a new studio in Burbank. He partnered with famed architect Kem Weber to create a state-of-the-art facility. Everything, from the size of the windows to the shape of the desks, was carefully designed. The new facility was an artist’s dream, but it had an unintended downside: the extra space and separation of offices took away from the collaborative environment of the previous facility. And because there were many more



Concept art from *The Sorcerer's Apprentice*.
Courtesy the Walt Disney Archives Photo Library
© Disney

animators working, Walt could not give each one the same personal attention, as he was able to in the past. Because of these changes, the family atmosphere began to break down.

Meanwhile, the Studios' ongoing success was bringing them attention from the artistic community. Many celebrated artists and writers started to seek Walt out, including painters like Salvador Dalí and Diego Rivera. Additionally, the famed conductor Leopold Stokowski collaborated with Walt on a project that would eventually become *Fantasia*, and Stokowski not only led the symphonic orchestra in the recording sessions, but

appears in the film as the orchestra's conductor.

In addition, *Fantasia*, *Pinocchio*, and *Bambi* were produced during this time and all three showed Walt's continued drive for innovation. For *Fantasia*, in particular, Walt wanted a way to surround his audience with music. To achieve this goal, his team created a system called Fantasound, which consisted of speakers that were installed all around a theater. But despite these innovations and the wonderful stories, *Pinocchio*, *Fantasia*, and *Bambi* all turned out to be box office disappointments, the primary reason for which was that the international box office was being severely impacted by World War II. These disappointing receptions would mark the beginning of what Walt would refer to as "the toughest period in (his) whole life."

"THE TOUGHEST PERIOD IN MY WHOLE LIFE"

1941 *The Reluctant Dragon* opens in June, *Dumbo* in October.
The Walt Disney Studios endures a three month strike.
Walt and El Grupo tour South America.
Elias Disney, Walt's father, dies on September 13.

1942 *Saludos Amigos* premieres, *Bambi* in Britain and the U.S.
1943 *Victory Through Air Power* opens in July.
1944 *The Three Caballeros* opens in Mexico City in December.

In 1941, a series of fights over issues of fair pay and union representation at the studios arose, and a group of artists went on strike. Lasting for three months, the dispute caused bitter divisions among friends. Eventually, a federal mediator was brought in to settle the strike.

At the same time, the U.S. government was becoming increasingly concerned about World War II. To make sure that ties with Central and South America were strong, Washington asked Hollywood to make films with Latin American themes. Walt agreed to do so, and he went on a goodwill tour of Central and South America with a handpicked group of artists to do research. One of those artists was named Mary Blair and this trip had a profound influence on her art.



Mary Blair, Field workers in South American setting, ca. 1941, courtesy the Walt Disney Family Foundation
© Disney

Soon after, she became one of the most important concept artists at the studios. The goodwill tour group's work would lead to two films: *Saludos Amigos* (1942) and *The Three Caballeros* (1944). As the trip was going on, the strike was settled and production began again. However, the atmosphere at the studios had changed forever.

A few months later, a bright spot in this tough period came in the form of *Dumbo* (1941). A film only 64 minutes in length, it was the first movie since *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* to be a

box office success. *Dumbo* was even slated to be on the cover of *Time* magazine in December 1941, but the bombing of Pearl Harbor took precedence.

World War II

As the country entered World War II, life in America was turned upside down. Overnight, the Disney lot was turned into a military base for an Army unit charged with defending a Lockheed plant nearby. Walt responded quickly to the changes, putting his efforts towards supporting the war effort. The Walt Disney Studios produced training films for the Armed Forces, they produced public-service films for civilians, and they designed insignia for various military units, keeping The Walt Disney Studios' doors open during the four years of war. After it ended, Roy Disney said that the Studios were "like a bear coming out of hibernation. We were skinny and gaunt and we had no fat on our bones at all."

POSTWAR PRODUCTION

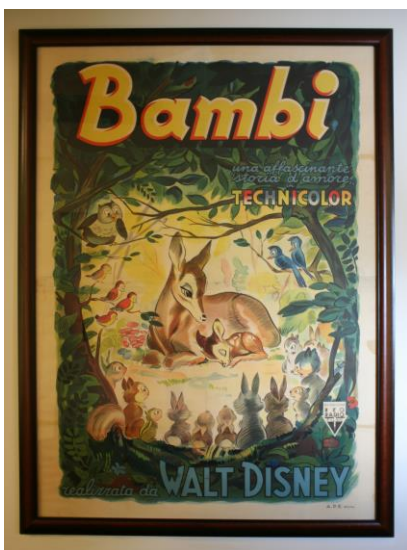
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| <p>1946 <i>Make Mine Music</i> opens in April, <i>Song of the South</i> in November.</p> <p>1947 <i>Fun and Fancy Free</i> opens in September.</p> <p>1948 <i>Melody Time</i> opens in May.</p> <p>1949 <i>So Dear to My Heart</i> opens in January, <i>The Adventures of Ichabod and Mr. Toad</i> in October.
<i>Seal Island</i> is released and wins an Academy Award®.</p> <p>1950 <i>Cinderella</i> opens in February, <i>Treasure Island</i> in June.
Walt's first television special, <i>One Hour in Wonderland</i>, is broadcast on Christmas Day.</p> | <p>1951 <i>Alice in Wonderland</i> opens in July.</p> <p>1952 <i>The Story of Robin Hood</i> opens in June.
Walt forms WED for his personal projects, including the formative Disneyland.</p> <p>1953 <i>Peter Pan</i> opens in February, <i>The Sword and the Rose</i> in July, and <i>The Living Desert</i> in November.
The Disneys create their own distribution company, Buena Vista.</p> |
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After the war ended, Walt continued to diversify and innovate from the mid-'40s into the early '50s. There were a number of stories left on the drawing board during World War II that were too long for a traditional animated short and too short for a feature-length film. Some were combined into what are termed "package features." They included *Make Mine Music* (1946) and *The Adventures of Ichabod and Mr. Toad* (1949). Although they were creative, the package features were not box office successes.

Walt blended animation with live-action in *Song of the South* (1946) and *So Dear to My Heart* (1949). Also during this chapter, The Walt Disney Studios had money that was earned overseas but was frozen in countries that were recovering from the war, like England. In response, Walt decided to put a film crew together and go to England to produce films there with the frozen funds. During this time he started making live-action films. The first of these films was *Treasure Island* (1950), followed by *The Story of Robin Hood* (1952).

In addition, Disney continued to produce traditional animated features back home, including *Cinderella* (1950), *Alice in Wonderland* (1951), *Peter Pan* (1953), and *Lady and the Tramp* (1955).

True-Life Adventures



Bambi poster, 1942 © Disney

When *Bambi* was in production, Walt hired a camera crew to go out into a forest and film wild deer. He wanted the footage for his animators to study so that they could draw deer more realistically. After they watched this footage, Walt realized that there were stories to be told about nature. He then created a new series called *True-Life Adventures*. For the first one, a crew was sent to film in the Pribilof Islands, just west of Alaska. The footage they brought back was turned into the film *Seal Island*. However, Walt had a tough time convincing theater owners to show it. He did manage to get one theater in Los Angeles County to show *Seal Island* for a week, which happens to be the minimum requirement to qualify to be nominated for an

Academy Award®. Despite its short run, *Seal Island* was nominated for an Academy Award, which it won. The *True-Life Adventure* series would go on to win a total of eight Academy Awards.

Life outside of work

Walt also made time for hobbies, like collecting miniatures. Some of which included china, gardening tools, and copies of the Qur'an and the Bible. At one point, Walt thought about creating dioramas made up completely of these miniatures. His idea involved loading the dioramas onto a train and sending the train across the country as a new form of entertainment, called "Disneylandia." But after he planned the idea out, Walt realized that it was going to be

expensive and impractical due to the fact that the size of its audience would have to be limited. However, the idea of going beyond the movie screen to entertain people stayed with him, as did the name “Disneylandia.”

No matter how busy Walt became at work, he always made time for his family. For example, he drove his daughters, Diane and Sharon, to school every day until they were of driving age. He also liked to take them to places like Griffith Park on the weekends. He would sit on a bench, eat peanuts, and watch his daughters ride the merry-go-round. During those outings, he thought about how there should be a place where parents and children

could have fun together. That idea combined with another one he had had during his time in Kansas City - he once told a friend that he wanted to have his own theme park.



Courtesy the Walt Disney Family Foundation

BEYOND THE BIG SCREEN

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| <p>1954 Diane Disney marries Ron Miller on May 9. <i>20,000 Leagues Under the Sea</i> opens in December.
The “Disneyland” television series premieres on October 27.
The first “Davy Crockett” television episode debuts in December.</p> <p>1955 Disneyland opens on Sunday, July 17. <i>Lady and the Tramp</i> opens in June.
The “Mickey Mouse Club” afternoon television show begins its regular broadcast on October 3.
U.S. consumers buy \$100 million worth of Davy Crockett merchandise.</p> <p>1956 <i>The Great Locomotive Chase</i> opens in June.</p> <p>1957 <i>Old Yeller</i> opens in December
The television series <i>Zorro</i> makes its debut on October 10.</p> <p>1958 <i>The Light in the Forest</i> opens in July, <i>White Wilderness</i> in August.</p> <p>1959 Sharon Disney marries Bob Brown on May 10.
<i>Sleeping Beauty</i> opens in January, <i>The Shaggy Dog</i> in March.
The <i>Matterhorn Bobsleds</i>, <i>Submarine Voyage</i>, & the <i>Monorail</i> premiere at Disneyland.</p> | <p>1960 <i>Pollyanna</i> opens in May.
Walt stages the opening ceremonies of the Winter Olympics at Squaw Valley.</p> <p>1961 <i>One Hundred and One Dalmatians</i> opens in January, <i>The Parent Trap</i> in June.</p> <p>1962 <i>Moon Pilot</i> opens in February, <i>In Search of the Castaways</i> in December.</p> <p>1963 <i>Summer Magic</i> opens in July, <i>The Sword in the Stone</i> in December.</p> <p>1964 Walt is presented the Presidential Medal of Freedom by Lyndon Johnson.
<i>Mary Poppins</i> opens in August.
The 1964/65 New York World’s Fair opens in April, featuring four major Disney attractions.</p> <p>1965 <i>Those Calloways</i> opens in January, <i>That Darn Cat</i> in December.</p> <p>1966 <i>The Ugly Dachshund</i> opens in February, <i>Follow Me, Boys!</i> in December.
Walt Disney dies on December 15.</p> |
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The Genesis of Disneyland

In May, 1950, the Disney family moved to a new home in Los Angeles, where Walt had enough space to build his own miniature railroad. Created with the help of other train enthusiasts from the studios, the railroad was named the Carolwood Pacific (after the street on which Walt's house was located). The train that ran on this railroad was called the Lilly Belle (named after Lillian).

It is at this time that Walt created a new organization, WED Enterprises, which was responsible for the planning of the theme park. The people who worked there, many of them employees hired away from the Studios, were known as Imagineers, a term that blends "imagination" and "engineering." They started making plans for a small plot of land Walt owned across the street from the Studios, thinking the name would be "Mickey Mouse Park." But Walt continued to come up with additional ideas, which quickly outgrew the original space. Walt then hired the Stanford Research Institute (SRI) to find a new location. After reviewing information like population trends and freeway planning, SRI suggested building the park in the then small town of Anaheim.



Walt showing Disneyland concept art,
ca. 1954 © Disney

To seek funding for the park, Walt and Roy used the concept art that the Imagineers created. They pitched not only to banks, but also to television. Although movie moguls saw television as a threat during this era, Walt saw television as an opportunity.

He and Roy partnered with ABC, with the network giving them \$500,000 and loan guarantees in exchange for an ownership stake in the park and a weekly television show. The show not only allowed Walt to bring his brand of entertainment to a television audience regularly, but it also gave him an opportunity to excite the public about the new park in Anaheim. He decided that the show, like the park, would be called "Disneyland." It was an immediate hit, and planning for the park continued.

On July 17, 1955, Disneyland opened its gates to what was supposed to be a preview by invitation but throngs of people could not wait for the public opening the next day. Tickets were copied, crowds swelled, and attractions broke down. But after the day ended, Walt and his team addressed what went wrong and they came up with solutions. In the following days, the crowds returned and Disneyland became a huge success.

Later projects in the 1950s

Although Walt moved beyond the big screen to create Disneyland, he continued to produce quality entertainment for television and film. The "Disneyland" television series continued to be

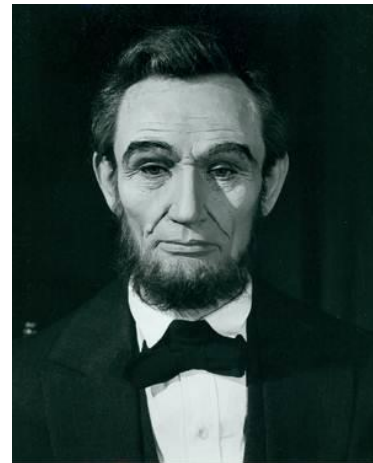
a hit, featuring such favorite heroes as Davy Crockett and the Swamp Fox. The show later transitioned to NBC and became “Walt Disney’s Wonderful World of Color.” Other programs, including the “Mickey Mouse Club” daily afternoon series and the evening weekly series “Zorro”, were introduced and became successful. Animated films, like *Sleeping Beauty* and *The Sword in the Stone*, debuted, as well as live-action films, like *20,000 Leagues Under the Sea* and *The Shaggy Dog*.

Projects in the 1960s

Walt was also asked to help out with the Olympic Winter Games in Squaw Valley, initially agreeing to create the opening and closing ceremonies. But because of Disneyland’s reputation, his team ended up coordinating parking, security, and ticketing, too.

Moving deeper into the 1960s, every department at the Disney lot came together to create *Mary Poppins*. It was an enormous success with audiences and critics alike; it was the first Disney film nominated for Best Picture, and Julie Andrews would go on to win the Academy Award® for Best Actress for her portrayal of Mary.

Also during this time, Walt was asked to build four attractions for the 1964/65 New York World’s Fair. The first was Great Moments with Mr. Lincoln, for the Illinois Pavilion, which featured a three-dimensional, animated figure of President Lincoln. To bring it to life, the Imagineers used a new form of robotics called Audio-Animatronics®. The second attraction was the *Ford Magic Skyway*, in which guests travelled in Ford cars through a natural history diorama. Some of the dinosaurs from this pavilion would find new homes in Disneyland after the fair. The third attraction was the *General Electric Carousel of Progress*, a theater show that celebrated how the quality of life had improved between different periods of American history. The fourth attraction, created for Pepsi-Cola in honor of UNICEF, was a boat ride that welcomed children of all ages, called “*it’s a small world*.” All of these pavilions were successful, which encouraged Walt to create something permanent for the East Coast.

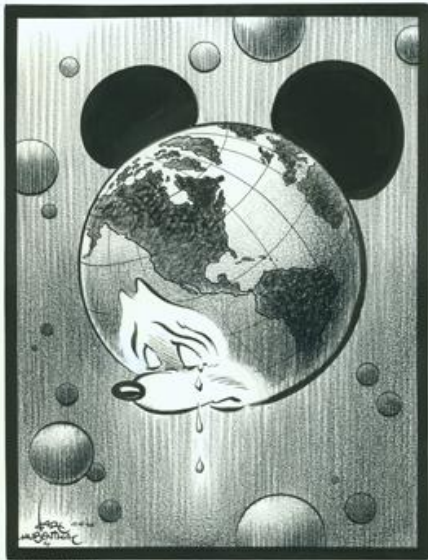


Head of Abraham Lincoln Audio-Animatronics®.

Photo courtesy Don Iwerks

For this next project, Walt focused on Central Florida. A vast amount of land was purchased and the project initially was called “Disney World.” Walt planned to build a theme park there, but his main focus was building a futuristic city, one that would introduce and test new ideas. He called this city the Experimental Prototype Community of Tomorrow, or EPCOT. Back on the West Coast, Walt was putting plans together for a new school, the California Institute of the Arts, as well as a ski resort for California’s Mineral King Valley.

EPILOGUE



Mickey Globe Crying, 1966 Carl Hubenthal,
Courtesy of the Walt Disney Family
Foundation

As these plans were coming together, Walt's health started to become an issue. He had suffered an injury playing polo in the 1930s that had never properly healed. One day in 1966, Walt went to the hospital across the street from the Disney lot to have it checked. A number of tests were done, including an X-ray of his lungs, since Walt has been a long-time smoker. The X-ray showed a spot the size of a walnut on Walt's left lung, which indicated a tumor. When the doctors performed the operation to remove the tumor in early November, they found that it had spread. As a result, they estimated that Walt had six months to two years to live.

After the surgery, Walt spent two weeks in the hospital recovering. His strong spirit prevailed, and he went back to work on a reduced schedule. However, in late November, he began to experience more pain, so he checked back into the hospital. Walt gradually felt

stronger in December, to the point that, on the 14th, he was using the ceiling tiles of his room to point out the layout of Disney World to Roy. But at 9:35 the next morning, Walt passed away. His death shocked his family and it stunned the world.

Despite his absence, Walt Disney remains one of the people most associated with positivity and hope. And Walt's story goes on with the legacy he left behind: his family, the company he built, the animators inspired by him who continue to reach new heights, the people who've enjoyed the entertainment he created, and everyone who has a hope or a dream.

Around 1964, Walt gave an interview to the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) during which, among other things, he reflected on his life and legacy.

Looking back on your life, what is your definition of happiness?

"Of course, I mean happiness is a state of mind. I mean, it's of your own doing. You can be happy or you can be unhappy, it's just according to the way you look at things, you know? So I think happiness is contentment but it doesn't mean you have to have wealth. But all individuals are different. Some of us just wouldn't be satisfied with just carrying out a routine job and being happy. Yet I envy those people. I had a brother who I really envied because he was a mailman. But he was the one who had all the fun. He had himself a trailer, and he used to go off and go fishing, and he didn't worry about payrolls and stories and picture grosses or anything. And he was the happy one. I always said, 'He's the smart Disney.'"

Looking back on your career, what has been your greatest reward?

"Well, my greatest reward, I think, is I've been able to build this wonderful organization. I've been able to enjoy good health. And the way I feel today, I feel like I can still go on being a part of this thing after 40 some odd years in the business. And also to have the public appreciate and accept what I've done all these years. That is a great reward."

If you had to do it all over again, would you do any part of it differently?

"Well, If I had to do over again ... no, I don't think I would. I don't know ... I hope I don't have to do it over again!"