

Walt disney



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Walt Disney was a pioneer in animated cartoons. His studio produced the first synchronized sound cartoon called Steamboat Willie. I chose Walt Disney because he changed family entertainment forever. Walter Alias Disney was born on December 5, 1901 to parent's Alias and Flora Disney, in Chicago, Illinois. Alias and Flora were married in the spring of 1888. Alias took a job as a hotel manager at Daytona Beach. Later that year the Disney's first son Herbert was born. In 1889 Alias moved his family to Chicago, IL. The Disney's second son Raymond was born later on that year. Four years later in 1893 their third son Roy was born.

Walt followed in 1901. In 1903 the Disney's last and first daughter Ruth was born. In 1906 Alias bought a farm outside of Marline, Missouri and moved his family. In 1909 Herbert and Raymond left the family farm, putting an even greater strain on Alias and his two other sons. With the two older boys gone there was more work for Roy and Walt, and whenever they misbehaved Alias would use "corrective" beatings with his belt (Elliot, pg. 7). As a child Walt loved to draw, and since his family didn't have a lot of money, he would end up drawing on anything he could find, usually he used toilet paper and a piece of coal.

In 1909 Alias came down with typhoid fever and was forced to sell the farm and moved the family to Kansas City, where he bought a newspaper route. Flora enrolled Roy and Walt into the Benton Grammar School. Everyday Roy and Walt would get up before three o'clock to deliver two daily editions of both the Morning Times and the Evening and Sunday Star seven days a week. Walt took a job delivering prescriptions for a local drugstore. He used

the money to buy extra newspapers to sell on street corners. He used the profits to buy art supplies. In 1911 Roy left home.

In the fall of 1917 Alias sold the newspaper route and bought a readership in the O-Cell Jelly factory in Chicago. Walt stayed behind to finish the school year and Herbert came to stay with him. When school was over Roy moved in and Walt decided to stay the summer in Kansas City. Lying about his age and saying he was 17 instead of 16, Walt got a job selling newspapers and refreshment on a train running from Missouri to Colorado. In the fall Walt moved back to Chicago and enrolled at McKinley High School for his Junior year. Walt also took evening classes at the Chicago Academy of Fine Arts.

When America entered World War I in 1917, Walt tried to enlist. The local recruiter was skeptical of Walt's age and asked for a birth certificate. Walt wrote to Chicago Cook County Hall of Records requesting a copy. He received a letter saying there was no record of a Walt Disney born around December 5, 1901, but there was a birth certificate for a Walter Disney born to Alias and Flora Disney on January 8, 1891. Unable to get his parents to sign a letter of consent that would allow him to enlist, Walt forged their signatures and was accepted as a volunteer for the International Red Cross.

He was then assigned to France to take care of sick and injured American soldiers. While in France he met another soldier who went by the name of Cracker. The two became friends and developed a scheme where Cracker would buy extra German helmets, shoot them full of holes, and hand them over to Walt who would then paint them to look like German helmets and sell

them to other soldiers as souvenirs. When Walt was finished with at Pressman-Rubin Studios drawing farm equipment for their catalogues. After a month of work he was laid off. While working at Pressman-Rubin, Walt met another artist named Bee lowers.

Together they created the lowers-Disney Commercial Artists. Their partnership only lasted less than a month before they ran out of money. In 1920 Walt started working for the Kansas City Film Ad Company starting at \$40 a week drawing cartoon ads. The Kansas City Ad needed to more employees to keep up with the growing popularity of animated shorts, so Walt told lowers to apply and he was later hired. Walt decided he was ready to do business on his own. He teamed up with Frank Newman and created the Newman Laugh-O-Grams. Laugh-O- Grams were unsuccessful and left Walt with very little profits and thousands of dollars in debt.

In July of 1923 Walt arrived in Los Angels at his Uncle Roberts souse. After he settled in Walt took a bus to the Settable Veterans Hospital were his brother Roy was recovering from tuberculosis. With \$500 from Uncle Robert and more money borrowed from Roy, the two formed the Disney Brothers Studios. After being turned down by all the distributors in Los Angels, Walt contacted Margaret Hinkler along with some unfinished footage from his days with Laugh-O-Grams he called " Alice" cartoons. About the adventures off little girl named Alice with animated characters. The " Alice" series debuted in March 1924.

The day after the film opened Walt contacted lowers to come and work for him. Works only agreed after Walt offered \$40 a week and stock in the

company. Because of the poor returns from the first " Alice" film Hinkler reducing the film's budget from \$1, 500 to \$900. Hinkler turned over control of her company to her husband Charles Mint who reduced the film's budgets even more. On April 7, 1925 Roy married his childhood sweetheart Edna Frances, whom Walt never liked. Roy introduced Walt to Lillian Bounds, who was one of the studio's new employees. Walt and Lillian were married on July 25, 1925 in Lowliest, Idaho, Lanolin's hometown.

Upon his return Walt informed Roy that he would be changing the name of the studio from the Disney Brother's Studio to the Walt Disney Studio. In 1926 construction on a new studio began, and the Disney's were informed that their contract was canceled because of the lack of interest in the " Alice" series. Mint said their contract might be able to be saved if they came up with an original cartoon character. Mint convinced the founder of Universal Pictures, Carl Lamely, to work with the Disney's and came up with " Oswald the Lucky Rabbit". In February 1928, Walt and Lillian went to New York for a contract-renewal meeting.

Mint only offer to Walt was that the budget for each cartoon to be cut from \$2, 250 to \$1, 800. Roy advised Walt to reject the contract and release all claims to Oswald and come up with a new character. Walt did this and on the train ride back to Los Angeles came up with the character of Mackey Mouse. The studio had \$30, 000 enough to produce three \$10, 000 cartoons. The first two Mackey Mouse cartoons Plane Crazy and Galloping' Gaucho failed to impress audiences. With the invention of motion picture films with sounds, Walt decided to meet with Patrick Powers to bring sound to the new Mackey Mouse cartoon Steamboat Willie.

The release of Steamboat Willie on November 18, 1928 became an overnight success and brought Walt Disney to the attention of Hollywood. In January of 1930 Lasker resigned and gave up his shares in the studio and opened up his own. Walt wanted released in 1933 and grossed more than \$125,000 breaking the previous record for a cartoon short. In December 19, 1933 Walt and Lasker's first child Diane Marie was born. In early 1935 Walt completed the story outline and production schedule for his first animated feature, Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs.

On December 31, 1936 the Disney's adopted daughter Sharon Mae was born. Unable to focus on his new daughter and Snow White Walt started sleeping on his office couch at the studio. With the studio nearing bankruptcy the release of Snow White on December 21, 1937 saved the studio. The film grossed \$8 million when the average price of admission was \$0.25. The film was dubbed in 10 languages and released in 46 countries. The success of Snow White inspired Walt to begin production on Pinocchio, Fantasia, and Dumbo. His goal was to release a cartoon feature every year for three years.

Walt built a new studio in Burbank and it was completed in 1939. The new studio was impossibly air-conditioned, every office had a private bathroom, a private coffee shop and lounge, four soundboards, an orchestra stage, a movie theater for private screenings, a rooftop penthouse club, and even a completely equipped gymnasium. Raymond and Herbert both decided to move to Hollywood. Raymond wanted to set up an on-site life insurance program for Walt's employees. Herbert requested a transfer from the

Portland, Oregon post office to Hollywood, where he hoped he could find a job for his daughter at the studio.

Walt moved his parents from Portland, where they were living, to Hollywood. The two brothers bought a new cottage for only \$8,000 for Elias and Flora just north of Burbank in Tailcoat Lake. Then on November 29, 1938 Walt was informed that his mother, Flora, had passed away. The cause of death was from fumes from a defective water boiler in the basement. Walt blamed himself because he had helped pick out the house. For the premier of Pinocchio in New York on February of 1940, Walt hired eleven midgets and had them dressed in Pinocchio outfits to dance around on the theater marquee.

For lunch food and refreshment were sent up to them along with a couple of quarts of liquor. By three o'clock that day the midgets were stark-naked and enjoying a crap game. The police were called with ladders to remove them and brought them down in pillowcases. Pinocchio was the second highest grossing film of the year. In 1936 J. Edgar Hoover, head of the FBI, started trying to recruit Walt as an informant. Then on November 10, 1940 Walt finally agreed in exchange for information about his parentage. Fantasia opened near the end of 1940 and received poor reviews.

He would be promoted to Special Agent in Charge in 1954. On the morning of May 28, 1941 Disney's employees went on strike because Disney wouldn't recognize the Cartoonist Guild, a union for cartoonists, in his studio. Roy wanted Walt away from the studio so he could negotiate with the U. S. Labor department. Walt reluctantly agreed and left for South America in August.

On September 9 Roy agreed to recognize the Cartoonists Guild as a union, rehire all employees who had been fired due to union activities, equal pay, guaranteed severance pay, paid vacations, and closed shop status.

When Walt returned to Hollywood he was more dejected than angry. He received more bad news, while he was in South America his father had passed away. Upon his return Walt accused the strike leaders of being Communists and reported them to the FBI. In 1941 Dumb was released and cost just under \$1 million to produce. In 1942 Walt Angels. Five weeks after his "retirement" the Naval Bureau of Aeronautics asked Walt to make twenty animated training films on a budget of \$80,000 to help with the war effort.

He agreed and worked out of an unused building on studio grounds. Bambini, which went into production in 1939, was released in 1942 and turned out to be a disappointment. In 1948, the studio began its transformation from animated features to live-action. Later that year Seal Island, footage of a colony of seals filmed in Alaska, received an Oscar as Best Short Subject. In December 1949, Walt was honored by Look magazine for "Distinguished Achievement Making the Most Original Films in the World" (Eliot, p. 206).