

Biography of Walt Disney

“All our dreams can come true – if we have the courage to pursue them.”

#1 Walt Disney was born on December 5, 1901 in Chicago Illinois to his father, Elias Disney, and mother, Flora Call Disney. Walt was one of five children, four boys and a girl. After Walt's birth the Disney family moved to Marceline Missouri, where Walt lived most of his childhood.

#2 Walt had very early interests in art. He would often sell drawings to neighbors to make extra money. Instead of doing his school work Walt doodled pictures of animals, and nature. Walt attended McKinley High School in Chicago. There, Disney divided his attention between drawing and photography, and contributing to the school paper. At night he attended the Academy of Fine Arts, to better his drawing abilities. Walt began to love and appreciate nature and wildlife, family and community, which were a large part of agrarian living. Though his father could be quite stern, and often there was little money, Walt was encouraged by his mother and older brother, Roy, to pursue his talents.

#3 During the fall of 1918, Disney attempted to enlist for military service. He was rejected because he was under age, only sixteen years old at the time. Instead, Walt joined the Red Cross and was sent overseas to France, where he spent a year driving an ambulance and chauffeuring Red Cross officials. His ambulance was covered from stem to stern, not with stock camouflage, but with Disney cartoons.

#4 Once Walt returned from France, he began to pursue a career in commercial art. He began producing short animated films for local businesses in Kansas City. By the time Walt had started to create *The Alice Comedies*, which was about a real girl and her adventures in an animated world, Walt ran out of money, and his company Laugh-O-Grams went bankrupt. Instead of giving up, Walt packed his suitcase and with his unfinished print of *The Alice Comedies* and twenty dollars in hand, headed for Hollywood to start a new business. He was not yet twenty-two. The early flop of *The Alice Comedies* inoculated Walt against fear of failure; he had risked it all three or four times in his life.

#5 After making a success of his "Alice Comedies," Walt became a recognized Hollywood figure. On July 13, 1925, Walt married one of his first employees, Lillian Bounds in Lewiston, Idaho. Later on they would be blessed with two daughters, Diane and Sharon .

#6 In 1932, the production entitled *Flowers and Trees*(the first color cartoon) won Walt the first of his studio's Academy Awards. In 1937 he released *The Old Mill*, the first short subject to utilize the multi-plane camera technique. On December 21, 1937, *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*, the first full-length animated musical feature, premiered at the Carthay Theater in Los Angeles. The film was produced at the unheard cost of \$1,499,000 during the depths of the Depression. The film is still considered one of the great feats and imperishable monuments of the motion picture industry. During the next five years Walt Disney Studios completed other full-length animated classics such as *Pinocchio*, *Fantasia*, *Dumbo*, and *Bambi*. It was Walt's enthusiasm and faith in himself and others that took him straight to the top of Hollywood society.

#7 Walt Disney's dream of a clean, and organized amusement park came true as Disneyland Park opened in 1955. Walt also became a television pioneer. Disney began television production in 1954, and was among the first to present full-color programming with his *Wonderful World of Color* in 1961.

#8 Walt Disney is a legend, a folk hero of the 20th century. His worldwide popularity was based upon the ideals which his name represents: imagination, optimism, creation, and self-made success in the American tradition.