



## WALT DISNEY TIMELINE

- 1901 Walter Elias Disney is born in Chicago to Elias Disney and Flora Call Disney.
- 1906 The Disneys move to Marceline, MO, where Walt has an idyllic childhood on a farm and develops a strong interest in drawing.
- 1910 Elias, his health poor, has to sell the farm.
- 1911 The family moves to Kansas City, MO, where Walt rises daily at 3:30 a.m. to deliver newspapers on his father's paper route. He discovers and falls in love with vaudeville and movies.
- 1917 The family moves to Chicago, where Walt draws pictures for the McKinley High School newspaper and attends evening classes at the Chicago Academy of Fine Arts. Walt hopes to become a newspaper cartoonist.
- 1918 Walt lies about his age to be accepted into the American Ambulance Corps and serves in France following the end of World War I.
- 1919 Walt returns to the US, moves to Kansas City and gets a job at the Pesmen-Rubin Commercial Art Studio for \$50 a month.
- 1920 Walt meets Ub Iwerks and forms Iwerks-Disney Commercial Artists. The company fails after one month. Walt and Iwerks get jobs with the Kansas City Slide Company (later KC Film Ad Company) and discover animation. While keeping his day job, Walt creates Newman Laugh-O-grams, which produces advertising and topical shorts and story cartoons.
- 1922 Walt incorporates Laugh-O-gram Films, Inc. with \$15,000 from backers.
- 1923 Laugh-O-gram goes bankrupt. Walt moves to Hollywood to become a director. With his brother Roy, he establishes the Disney Brothers Studio when he lands a contract for the "Alice Comedies," a series in which a young girl filmed in live action interacts with animated characters.
- 1924 Walt hires animators, including Iwerks, ceases animating, and focuses on story development and direction.
- 1924 Lillian Bounds, Walt's future wife, starts work at the Studios as an inker.
- 1925 Walt and Lillian get married.
- 1926 Walt and Roy rename the studio Walt Disney Studios and move it to a new building on Hyperion Avenue. The birthplace of some of Disney's greatest films, it later becomes known as the Hyperion studio.
- 1927 Film distributor Charles Mintz contracts Walt Disney Studios to create a new series of animation films based on an undeveloped character, Oswald the Lucky Rabbit. As the distributor for the cartoons, Mintz owns rights to it. When the series succeeds and Walt asks for a larger budget, Mintz asserts trademark rights and tries to take over Walt Disney Studios. Walt abandons the character to Mintz.
- 1928 Walt creates Mickey Mouse. He joins the vanguard of the talking-picture revolution when he produces *Steamboat Willie*, an innovative cartoon that synchronizes sound and animation. During the next year, Mickey becomes a national sensation.
- 1929 Walt launches "Silly Symphonies," a series of cartoons that combine music and animation.
- 1930 Roy and Walt Disney license Mickey-related merchandising.
- 1931 Membership in the Mickey Mouse Club passes one million people.
- 1932 Walt acquires exclusive use of three-strip Technicolor for cartoons and incorporates the technology in his films. He hires teachers from the Chouinard Art Institute to give classes at the Studio.
- 1933 *Three Little Pigs*, the 36<sup>th</sup> "Silly Symphony," is distributed, with the original song, "Who's Afraid of the Big Bad Wolf?" The song becomes a national hit and an anthem for the Great Depression. Lillian Disney gives birth to Diane Disney.

- 1936 Lillian and Walt adopt Sharon Disney.
- 1937 Disney Studios develops a sophisticated multiplane camera that simultaneously shoots several levels of cels and backgrounds and gives depth to its films. The Studio uses it in a “Silly Symphony,” *The Old Mill*, and then in Disney’s first feature-length animated film, *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*.
- 1938 Disney Studios acquires a 50-acre lot in Burbank, CA, for a new studio. Walt and Leopold Stokowski agree to collaborate on a movie that weds animation art to classical music, *Fantasia*. Walt’s mother, Flora, dies.
- 1939 Walt wins an honorary Academy Award with a unique casting: one full-sized Oscar and seven miniatures for *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*.
- 1940 Disney releases *Pinocchio* and *Fantasia*. *Fantasia* is released with a new technology, Fantasound, which precedes stereo and surround sound by 20 years. Neither film is commercially successful, and Walt Disney Studios issues 600,000 shares of common stock at \$5.00 per share.
- 1941 Disney Studios releases *Dumbo*, which is a modest commercial success. The animators at the studio strike and unionize. Walt goes on a goodwill tour in South America. The United States enters World War II; the U.S. Army requisitions half of Disney Studios to house troops assigned to protecting a nearby Lockheed plant. Walt’s father, Elias, dies.
- 1942 Disney Studios releases *Bambi*, its most naturalistic animation film to date, and *Saludos Amigos*, a movie for South American markets. *Bambi* is not commercially successful. Disney Studios begins making morale-boosting and propaganda films.
- 1944 Disney re-releases *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* successfully.
- 1946 Walt, who has provided Mickey Mouse’s voice for nearly 20 years, reassigns the role for *Fun and Fancy Free*. The studio releases *Song of the South*, which enjoys commercial success.
- 1947 James Baskett, who played Uncle Remus in *Song of the South*, wins an honorary Academy Award. Walt testifies before the House Un-American Activities Committee on the role of communist agitation in the 1941 animators strike at the Studio.
- 1948 Disney Studios premieres *Seal Island*, the first of the “True-Life Adventures” series, and one of the film industry’s earliest nature documentaries. Walt visits a railroad fair in Chicago and soon decides to create a railroad for his home.
- 1949 *Seal Island* wins the Academy Award for best two-reel documentary.
- 1950 *Cinderella* becomes Disney’s first commercially successful animated feature since *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*. Disney releases *Treasure Island*, its first all live-action movie.
- 1953 Disney creates the Buena Vista Film Distribution Company.
- 1954 Disney contracts with ABC television to produce a one-hour television program in exchange for a \$500,000 investment by ABC in Disneyland. Walt buys 244 acres of land near Anaheim, CA to be the site for Disneyland.
- 1955 *Lady and the Tramp* is the first animated feature filmed in wide-screen CinemaScope technology. Disneyland opens and in two months receives over one million visitors. Walt introduces the “Mickey Mouse Club” program on ABC.
- 1960 Disney serves as Head of Pageantry of the 1960 Winter Olympics
- 1961 Walt and Roy establish plans to create the California Institute of the Arts through the merger of two financially distressed professional schools, the Los Angeles Conservatory of Music, founded in 1883, and the Chouinard Art Institute, founded in 1921.
- 1964 *Mary Poppins* is released and is later nominated for 13 Academy Awards. President Lyndon Johnson presents Walt with the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the nation's highest civil honor. Walt, working in planning consultation with Robert Moses, designs four exhibits for the 1964-1965 World’s Fair in New York City, including “it’s a small world.”
- 1965 Walt Disney Studios purchases land in Orlando, FL for EPCOT, the Experimental Prototype Community of Tomorrow, a foreshadowing of the New Urbanism movement, which also leads to the creation of Walt Disney World.
- 1966 Walt dies on December 15.