

The name Walt Disney is known all over the world. He was the creator of Mickey Mouse and a pioneer* in the making of animated cartoons.



For millions of people who watched his weekly television program, he was an important part of something the family did together. He was a self-made man, and this is the story of how he did it.

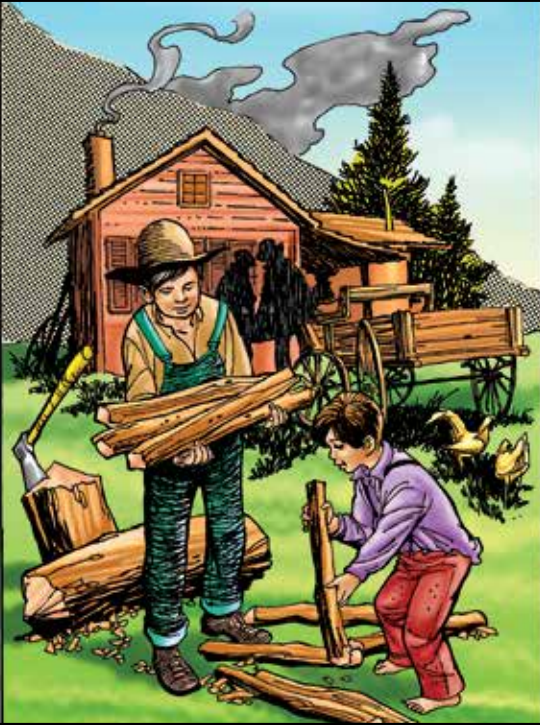
He was born in Chicago in 1901, the fourth of five children. His father, Elias Disney, was working as a building contractor at the time.



His mother, Flora, was a school teacher before her marriage, but gave it up to raise her children.

* to originate or take part in the development of

When Walt was four years old, the family moved to a farm near Marceline, Missouri.



There was a lot of hard work to be done, and Elias made sure that his children did their share.

The two oldest boys didn't take to this new life. They ran away from home and went back to Chicago.

C'mon, Skinny!



Walt's best friend was his brother Roy. Roy was eight years older than Walt.

Look, Roy! I made this picture of Skinny!

That's great, kid!



Walt's father tried to make a living selling the apples from his two large orchards. After five years he knew he couldn't do it. He sold the farm and they moved to Kansas City.



A year went by. Roy finished high school and left home as his older brothers had done.

I wish I could go with you, Roy.

Me too, kid, but you've got to finish school.



Walt continued going to school and delivering papers. And on Saturdays he went to art classes at the Kansas City Art Institute.

Very good, Walt!



Sometimes in the evening, Elias Disney let his son go to the movies with a friend whose father owned a theater.



The movies they saw were silent. The actors would move their lips to speak, and the audience could read what they were saying at the bottom of the screen.

Walt used some of the jokes he saw in the movies to put together an act for the local amateur shows.



In 1917, the year the United States entered World War I, Elias Disney sold the paper route and invested his money in a jelly factory in Chicago. When the family moved, Walt stayed behind to finish the school year.

That summer he worked as a "news butcher" on the Santa Fe Railroad.



In the fall he went to Chicago. He also worked in the jelly factory and took art classes at night.



One day, after school was out, Walt got a message from Roy. He was passing through Chicago on his way to a navy training camp and asked Walt to meet him at the train station.

Gee, kid! It's great to see you! You've gotten so tall!



They talked until the order was given for Roy and the other recruits* to board the train.

You there! On board! Train leaves in half a minute!



The officer had taken sixteen-year-old Walt for one of the recruits. It made him feel proud ... and it gave him an idea.

* a newly enlisted or drafted member of the armed forces

Walt came back to the States in 1919. He headed for Kansas City to look for work as an artist.

His first job was at Gray's Advertising Company. There he met another young artist by the name of Ub Iwerks.



By December, both Walt and Ub had been laid off.

Why don't we start our own business? We could do ads and letterheads and things like that.

Sure! Why not?



A small newspaper gave them some office space in exchange for artwork. Walt bought supplies with money he had saved. They were in business!

We got two new ads today.



A few months later, they went out of business.

Walt and Ub were not doing well when they heard of a job opening at the Kansas City Film Ad Company.

Forty dollars a week! That's more than we both make together!

Why don't you take the job? I'll stay over here.



Disney convinced the company to hire Ub too.