Walt Disney Essay, Research Paper

Walt Disney is a cartoonist and master of motion picture animation. He made the world fall in love with a large-eared mouse, a scheming duck, and dozens of other animal characters. As his career progresses he turned the making of full-length animated films into an art form. Walt lived on the edge of tomorrow but he dared to make his dreams come true. Walt Disney was born on December 5, 1901 into a modest Chicago household. His first name was taking from the Congregational minister who baptized him, his middle name was Elias named after his father. Walt s father Elias Disney was a Canadian and of Anglo-Irish descent. Elias had many different jobs through his life. Walt s mother Flora Disney was a lively, even tempered woman. She would read the children stories and play games with them. She cooked, cleaned and made butter which she sold in town. Walt was the fourth of five children. He had three brothers, Herbert, Raymond, Roy and one younger sister Ruth. In 1906 the Disney family moved to a farm in Marline, Missouri. On the farm Walt would take cared of the animals, chickens, pigeons, ducks and pigs. He liked to work even though caring for the animals was a big job for a boy Walt s age. He named all the animals and he would draw animals on the farm and in the fields around it. There was no paper to spare in the Disney household, so he sketched animals on toilet paper and wrapping paper. Relatives admired Walt s drawings and his Aunt Margaret from Kansas City sent him drawing materials. 2 Elias Disney was a hard man, a believer in physical punishment and harsh economic discipline. The children received no allowances and no playthings. For Christmas their presents were practical items like shoes and underwear. It was Roy Disney, working at odd jobs, who supplied Walt and his sister with an occasional toy. Walt Disney didn t start school in Marline until he was almost seven years old. His dad wanted him to wait until his younger sister Ruth could attend school with him. Walt went to The Park School, it was about one mile away from Disney s house. Walt only spent two years at The Park School. He had to leave because Herbert and Raymond saved up enough money and ran away. Roy was eight years older than Walt and he didn t like the farm. Only Walt and his little sister liked the farm. Elias got typhoid fever from the well water, he was in poor health for years. Roy couldn t run the farm himself and it was too small to support a family. In the summer of 1910 the Disney s sold there farm and moved to Kansas City Missouri. Walt had only spent five years in Marline but he would never forget it or the animals or the people he knew there. In Kansas City his dad supported his family with a newspaper delivery service. Since he was in poor health, he couldn t deliver the papers himself. That job was up to Walt and Roy. Every morning, they were up by 3:30am to start there routes. They weren t allowed to throw the papers, in the warm weather they had to take each one up to the door and place it there, unfolded with a stone on top to weigh it down. In cold weather, they had to open the storm door and put the paper inside. As soon as they were done delivering the papers they would rush home, have breakfast and go to school. After school they delivered the evening paper. Sometimes Walt was so tired he would take a nap in the corridor of one of the apartment houses where he delivered papers. All of the money Roy and Walt made from delivering newspapers went to their father. One day Roy ran away. Walt would make money of his own by delivering more papers and sweeping 3 out the candy store across the street from his school and by delivering prescriptions for a drugstore. He spent most of his money of his money on candy. While Walt was working his schoolwork at the Benton school suffered. Walt s interest was outside schoolwork. In Kansas City, he discovered the world of professional entertainment. It was movies that made the biggest impression on Walt. Walt and his friends would act at Benton School. They would do short acting based on Charlie Chaplin s film character. Walt enjoyed performing before an audience, but he liked drawing even better. When Walt was fourteen he began taking art lessons on Saturday mornings at the Kansas City Art Institute. By this time he was sure he wanted to be a cartoonist. Elias didn t approve of Walt s ambition, even though he paid of Walt s art lessons. In 1917, Elias decided to move again, back to Chicago which was Walt s birthplace. He sold his newspaper route and invested the money in a Chicago jelly factory. Walt was going to graduate from Benton School in June so he stayed behind with a friend. After his graduation, Walt took a summer job on the railroad. He sold food and newspapers to passengers. It turned out to be one of the best summers Walt ever had. He wore a blue uniform with gold buttons, he traveled back and forth from Kansas City to towns and cities in a number of Midwestern states. Walt s summer job gave him a lifelong love for trains. At the end of the summer, Walt joined his family in Chicago. He entered McKinley High School and drew cartoons for the school newspaper. After school he studied cartooning at the Chicago Academy of Fine Arts. He paid for the lessons himself with the money he saved from his part time jobs. He held several jobs during the school year, one was on Chicago s elevated railroad. 4 In 1917 Roy and his older brothers joined the armed forces. In 1918, when Walt was sixteen , he lied about his age and joined the American Red Cross as an ambulance driver. he only spent one year in high school, and he never returned. Walt was shipped to France and drove ambulances and trucks. In France Walt still found time to draw, he made posters for the barracks where he and his army buddies lived. He also sent back letters that were illustrated with cartoons to the school newspaper. When he got back from France he moved out of his parent s house and joined Roy and one of his other brothers in the family s old house in Kansas City. Walt landed a job in a small commercial art studio. He was eighteen years old and at last he had a job as an artist even though it wasn t a cartoonist job. The advertising firm Walt Disney joined in Kansas City in 1919 was called The Pesman-Rubin Commercial Art Studio. Walt had to make drawings of agricultural implements, which didn t interest him very much. After Christmas he was let go. Walt and his friend Ubbe Iwerks decided to form their own art studio. The named it Iwerks-Disney. Then Walt found a cartoonist job at Kansas City Film Ad Company and it paid forty dollars a week. Ubbe told him to take the job. At this job Disney learned the essentials of animation. Walt got Ubbe Iwerks a job at Kansas City Film Ad Company. They made short cartoons for local businesses. Walt and Ubbe would make there own carton in their garage. The called them Laugh-O-Grams, but Walt wanted to make longer cartoons like the ones he has seen in the movies. Together the made Alice s Wonderland. They couldn t sell it yet. Walt was running out of money, so Roy gave him $30 dollars but then he used up all that money. In 1923 Disney declared bankruptcy. He was tired of struggling to make cartoons.

5 In July 1923 Walt left for Los Angeles to try and peruse his dreams. He wrote a letter to a New York film distributor to buy his Alice s Wonderland films. They did for $1500 dollars each. Roy checked out of the veterans hospital to help his brother. On July 13, 1925 when Walt was twenty-three he married Lillian Bounds. Lillian was an inker for his company, his company was called Walt Disney Studio. One day on a train ride, Walt was thinking about all the mice that were in his office back in Kansas city. He drew a mouse and wanted to name it Mortimer. Lillian didn t like that name she thought Mickey Mouse would be better. Walt and Ubbe spent many hours discussing Mickey s personality. They decided he would be gallant, mischievous, resourceful, and wistful. On May 15, 1928, the first Mickey Mouse cartoon was previewed at a Hollywood movie house. The audience didn t like them very much so Walt made another Mickey cartoon but it got the same reaction. He decided to make another Mickey cartoon with sound. IT as called Steamboat Willie. The cartoon opened on November 18, 1928. It was an immediate hit. Walt once said When people laugh at Mickey Mouse, it s because he s so human; and that is the secret of his popularity. By the end of 1929, Mickey Mouse was famous. Walt Disney loved Mickey Mouse, he used his own voice for Mickey s voice. Disney said, The life and ventures of Mickey Mouse have been closely bound up with my own personal and professional life. It is understandable that I should have sentimental attachment for the little personage who played so big a part in the course of Disney Productions and has been so happily accepted as an amusing friend whenever films are shown around the world. He still speaks for me and I still speak for him. Soon after Mickey was famous Ubbe Iwerks resigned. He said he couldn t stand the tension in the studio. Walt was very upset that he left. In 1931 Walt had a nervous breakdown, it was caused by pushing himself and animators on the job. He took a 6 vacation on doctors orders and when he came back he balanced out his work so there wouldn t be so much pressure. The Disney Company wasn t getting much money from Mickey Mouse films because the contract he signed wasn t paying there part of the deal. Disney made a new cartoon called Flowers and Trees, it was the first color cartoon. In 1932 it won an Academy Award. By the early 1930 s merchandise with Mickey was being sold all over the country, this brought a lot of money to the Walt Disney Company. On January 13, 1930 Mickey Mouse appears in his first comic strip. Walt and Lillian had a baby girl on December 18, 1933. They named her Diane Disney. Later Walt and Lillian decided to adopt another baby. Lillian could not get pregnant and in the 1930 s there were few ways for physicians to help couples with fertility problems conceive a child. Sharon was a little baby when she joined the family in 1936. Walt Disney always wanted to make full length animated films and he finally did. On December 21, 1937 it was the world premiere of Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs. It was the first animated film. They made millions of dollars from the movie and they won an Academy Award for best picture of 1937. Disney made many other full length films after Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs, but they didn t make as much money. Ubbe Iwerks came back to work for the Disney company, but Walt and Ubbe never became close again. Walt couldn t forget his betrayal. Walt was getting older and his voice was getting hoarse because he was a heavy smoker. So he stopped doing Mice s voice, Mickey would never be the same again. On November 26, 1938 Flora Disney died of asphyxiation due to a defective furnace. Walt and Roy blame themselves because it happened on the house they purchased for their parents on 1937 in Southern California. Before long on August 7 17,1941 Elias Disney passed away. He never really recovered from the loss of his wife Flora. One day Walt and his daughters were at an amusement park and Walt was sitting on the bench while his daughters went on the rides. Then he thought there should be a place where the parents and the children could have fun together. At that time he thought of making a Mickey Mouse Park. Roy said it was too expensive, so Walt took some of his own money and paid architects to come up with a plan for the enterprise. There would only be one entrance and then four lands. The lands were Tomorrowland, Fantasyland, Adventureland, and Frontierland. Each land would have exciting rides. He decided to call it Disneyland, everyone loved the park to was so fun and it had all the Disney characters walking around. Disney once said It has that thing-the imagination, and feeling of happy excitement-I knew when I was a kid. He also said To al that come to this happy place: welcome. Disneyland is your land. Here age relives fond memories of the past, and here youth may savor the challenge and promise of the future. Disneyland is dedicated to the ideals, the dreams, and the hard facts that have created America… with hope that it will be a source of joy and inspiration to all the world. Disneyland opened on Sunday July 17, 1955. The first day was a disaster because more people came that were expected. Rides broke down, restaurants ran out of food, and water fountains ran out of wate died in St. Joseph s Hospital directly across the street from the Disney Studio on Burbank. He died immediate after the acute circulatory collapse. Walt died at the peak of his producing career in everywhere. Disney didn t make it to see DisneyWorld s opening in October 1971 but he did lead a very exiting a full life. All in all Walt made his wildest dreams come true. He was a great man with a great vision, he had a heart like a child. Walt created the parks and his cartoons not for money, but for the child in all of us.