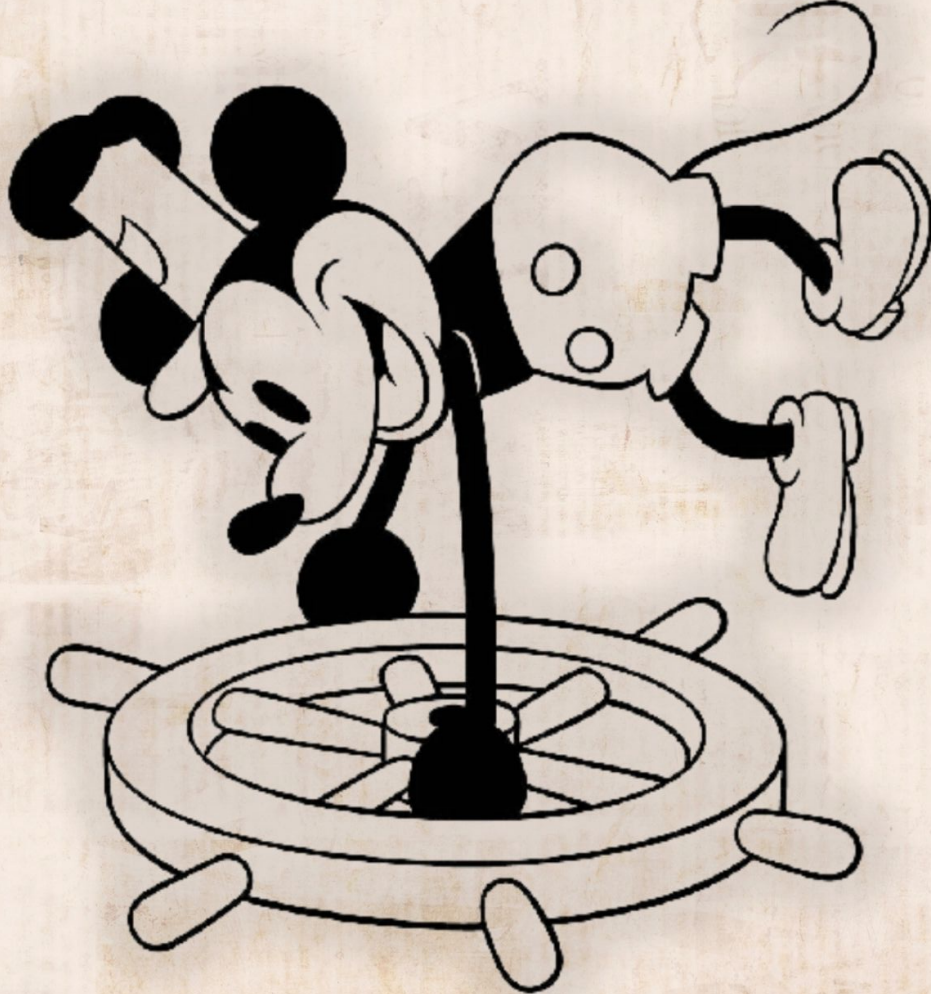


STEAMBOAT WILLIE



The path to actually producing "Steamboat Willie" was fraught. Walt first had to figure out how they would package the film with sound. After figuring out how to add music to "Steamboat Willie," Walt had to convince his team that it would work.

This "psychological hurdle" is essentially what gave Disney an edge. Walt's competitors either already had a sound cartoon produced or had such a project in the works by the time he got started on the third Mickey Mouse short — but none of these made even close to the impression as "The Jazz Singer" or "Steamboat Willie."

He set up a test screening. Ub Iwerks animated a rough sequence of Mickey at the steamboat's wheel, and Walt arranged for Jackson to play harmonica and other animators to make various sound effects.

Reichenbach managed the very Colony Theater. Universal had wanted to screen "Steamboat Willie" in. Disney wanted \$1,000 and, despite that being steep for the time, Reichenbach agreed. "Steamboat Willie" debuted on November 18, 1928. The reaction was both immediate and overwhelming.