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MARCH 26, 1961

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Small fry stampede up castle drawbridge at opening of Fantasyland. Full guided tour of Disneyland takes about two hours

# The girl guides of Disneyland

by LLOYD SHEARER

ANAHEIM, CALIF.

**S**PEAK TO ANYONE who has toured the commercial playgrounds of the world. He will tell you that one of the cleanest, most imaginative, most efficient, most unforgettable fun centers is Disneyland.

The major reason for this is Mickey Mouse's world-famous father, Walt Disney.

Disney is a man bedeviled by a perfectionist complex. According to him, "Everything can be improved." From time to time he tours his fabulous playground, says to his aides, "Let's put a mountain here, a monorail there and a submarine ride here."

When an assistant asks, "And what will we use for money?"—Disney gives his usual answer: "See my brother Roy."

Roy is the financial genius of the Disney empire. "I like to keep Walt away from Disneyland," he confides. "Each time he makes a suggestion it costs us another million."

To date, however, one of Disney's best suggestions costs Disneyland "peanuts"—attractive, wholesome, friendly girl guides, Disneyettes, who conduct guided tours of from two to 20.

"In the past five years," Disney explains, "our park has gotten so large, we've added so many new attractions, keep adding them all the time, that many visitors wander around by themselves for a whole day. Don't see half of what they should."

The Disneyettes remedy this situation. At a cost of \$4 for an adult and \$2.50 for a child, they conduct a two-hour tour in which the visitor sees the whole works—Fantasyland, Frontierland, Adventureland, Main Street, U.S.A.—the whole kit and caboodle.

Not the least pleasant part of the tour is the girl guide herself—cheerful, friendly, well-built, knowledgeable—everything that a young helpful woman should be.

At the moment there are 40 Disneyettes on duty—the force will be expanded to meet the summer crowds—and each is a specially-trained, hand-picked honey.



Girl guide Marie Whistler pins tour pin on young visitor from the Philippines, as child's mother looks on approvingly.

Says Tom Walker, in charge of guest relations: "We interview about 10 girls for each one we hire. What we look for is personality and warmth and a genuine regard for people. We don't care if she's 18 or 30, single or married. Does she speak clearly? Does she smile? Can she project her voice? If a girl is multilingual that's an advantage. Right now we have girls who speak French, German, Spanish, Japanese, Swedish and Arabic."

"When we accept a girl," Walker adds, "we put her in our training school for two weeks. She's given a Disneyland dictionary, full of factual data on all the sights, rides and exhibits. She studies this carefully, then memorizes answers to the questions most frequently asked—for example: How large is Disney-

land? How many employees? How much did it all cost?"

"The girls then meet among themselves to discuss common problems, such as what to do with women who have to feed their babies, or what to do about people who go into a restroom and never come out, or what to do about people who get lost."

The Disneyettes describe their job as "the dream job of all time."

Points out Cicely Rigdon of Yorkshire, England: "People come here for fun. They're in a good mood. They're pleasant and happy. It's so easy to please such people. They're tolerant and understanding. I remember one time I had a Southern woman on one of my tours. I speak English with a Yorkshire accent."

"'Honeychile,' she said to me. 'Ah don't want you to feel hurt, but Ah asked for an English-speaking guide.'"

Most of the girl guides work a six-hour day at \$2 an hour, five days a week. Most are or have been married, and several are mothers. Myrna Mason, 27, of nearby Garden Grove, is a typical example. She has three children, 7, 5 and 2, and works as a Disneyette "for the extra money."

"I love it here!" she exclaims. "The fun environment brings out the best in everybody. Once in a while we get a nut or two on a tour, but they're easy to handle. Like a few weeks ago, a fellow came up to me and said, 'Sweetheart, where's the tattoo shop? I wanna get a tattoo of Disneyland put on my chest.'"

"I told him we had no tattoo shop in Disneyland. 'That being the case,' he said, 'I'll do without it, because you got everything else.'"

The one cardinal rule all the Disneyettes must obey is known as "the no-false-information rule." If a visitor asks a question and the guide doesn't know the answer, she must politely reply: "I don't know, but I'll find out for you."

Says Disneyette Marie Arias: "It's the most convenient answer we girls have—especially when some guy asks for our phone number."