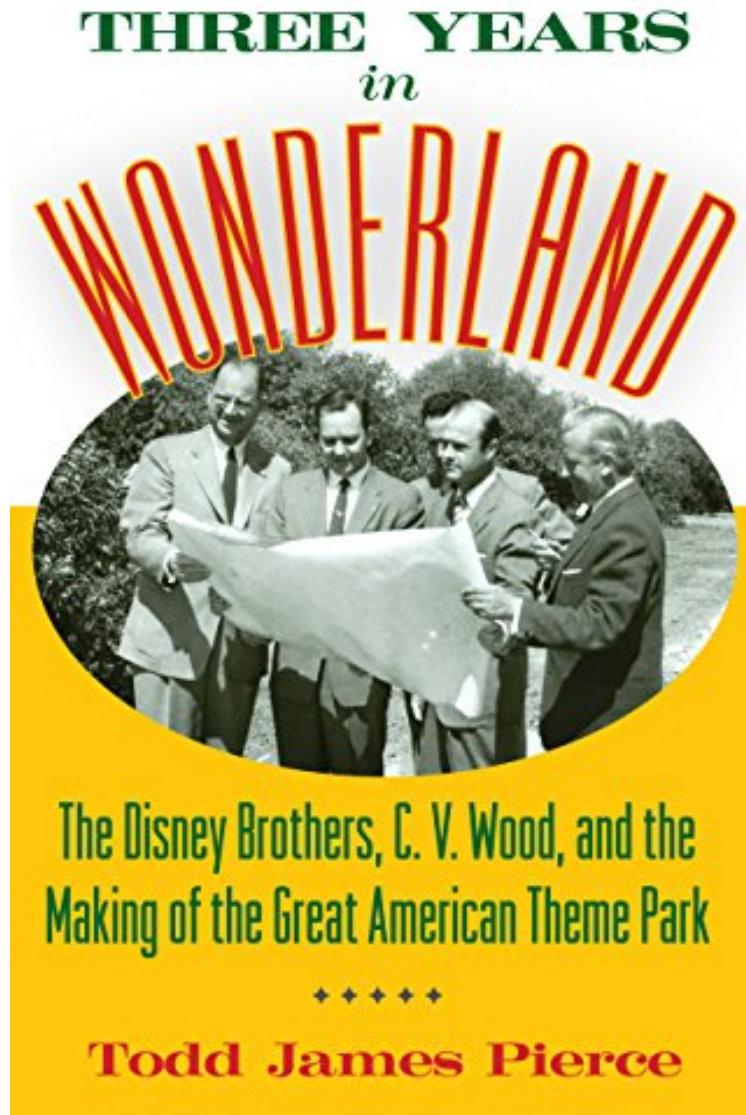


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Three Years in Wonderland: The Disney Brothers, C. V. Wood, and the Making of the Great American Theme Park

Todd James Pierce

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Todd James Pierce : Three Years in Wonderland: The Disney Brothers, C. V. Wood, and the Making of the Great American Theme Park before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Three Years in Wonderland: The Disney Brothers, C. V. Wood, and the Making of the Great American

Theme Park:

4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. Very interesting, could use photographs
By TLRAAs a California native who practically grew up at Disneyland in the 1970s and 1980s, I've always been fascinated with the park's history and how it came to be built so quickly. I'd never heard of C.V. Wood before, and it's not surprising that a somewhat ruthless, smooth-talking, fast-living Texan who ramrodded the project would be written out of the company's official history because of his differences with Walt. But it appears that Walt's dream park, near-disaster though it was on opening day, would never have gotten even that far without Wood. Two things that could have been better: the last chapter could have been expanded to tell us more detail about the rest of Wood's career; and the book desperately needed some vintage photographs of Wood and the park's construction.
4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. Outstanding!
By G. GaonaNot much I can add to the excellent reviews already posted, but want to chime in and recommend this book to anyone interested in what it took to make Disneyland happen. It's definitely a different take than the usual company sanctioned park history, but I feel it gives credit where credit is due without ever taking anything away from Walt. Highly recommended, I think even the seasoned Disneyland enthusiast will find lots of new information in the book.
1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Fasinating book, particularly that I knew C. V ...
By PennFasinating book, particularly that I knew C.V. but not well, as I was just a ride operator in the early years of the park. Much of this book, I had never heard of, but the research that Todd did is incredible. Well done, and a must read by any Disneyland fan.
Bob Penfield

While the success of Disneyland is largely credited to Walt and Roy Disney, there was a third, mostly forgotten dynamo instrumental to the development of the park?fast-talking Texan C. V. Wood. *Three Years in Wonderland* presents the never-before-told, full story of “the happiest place on earth.” Using information from over one hundred unpublished interviews, Todd James Pierce lays down the arc of Disneyland’s development from an idea to a paragon of entertainment. In the early 1950s, the Disney brothers hired Wood and his team to develop a feasibility study for an amusement park Walt wanted to build in southern California. “Woody” quickly became a central figure. In 1954, Roy Disney hired him as Disneyland’s first official employee, its first general manager, and appointed him vice president of Disneyland, Inc., where his authority was exceeded only by Walt. A brilliant project manager, Wood was also a con man of sorts. Previously, he had forged his university diploma. A smooth-talker drawn to Hollywood, the first general manager of Disneyland valued money over art. As relations soured between Wood and the Disney brothers, Wood found creative ways to increase his income, leveraging his position for personal fame. Eventually, tensions at the Disney park reached a boiling point, with Walt demanding he be fired. In compelling detail, *Three Years in Wonderland* lays out the struggles and rewards of building the world’s first cinematic theme park and convincing the American public that a \$17 million amusement park was the ideal place for a family vacation. The early experience of Walt Disney, Roy Disney, and C. V. Wood is one of the most captivating untold stories in the history of Hollywood. Pierce interviewed dozens of individuals who enjoyed long careers at the Walt Disney Company as well as dozens of individuals who?like C. V. Wood?helped develop the park but then left the company for good once the park was finished. Through much research and many interviews, *Three Years in Wonderland* offers readers a rare opportunity to stand shoulder-to-shoulder with the men and women who built the best-known theme park in the world.

“Readers will get an inside look at the Disney brothers and their dubious yet immensely charismatic associate C. V. Wood, along with Disneyland’s near-disastrous opening day in 1955. With the extensive appeal of the backstory of America’s original theme park, this book will be equally engaging for those drawn to the origins of such destinations, mid-twentieth-century American workplace culture, California history, and all things Disney.”
Library Journal, 04/01/2016 issue (Volume 141, No. 6, pgs. 105-106)
“Three Years in Wonderland is one of the most important contributions ever made to Disney parks history. Meticulously researched, it is a revolutionary book which sheds new light on the early days of Disneyland. Written with passion and talent, Todd Pierce’s magnum opus is a fascinating read for Disney enthusiasts and history buffs alike.”
Didier Ghez, author of *Disneyland Paris: From Sketch to Reality*; *Disney’s Grand Tour: Walt and Roy’s European Vacation, Summer 1935*; and *They Drew as They Pleased: The Hidden Art of Disney’s Golden Age*
About the Author
Todd James Pierce, Orcutt, California, is the author of three previous books, including *Newsworld*, which won the Drue Heinz Literature Prize. His work has appeared in over seventy magazines and journals, including the *Harvard* and the *North American*. He is a professor of literature at California Polytechnic State University in San Luis Obispo, California.