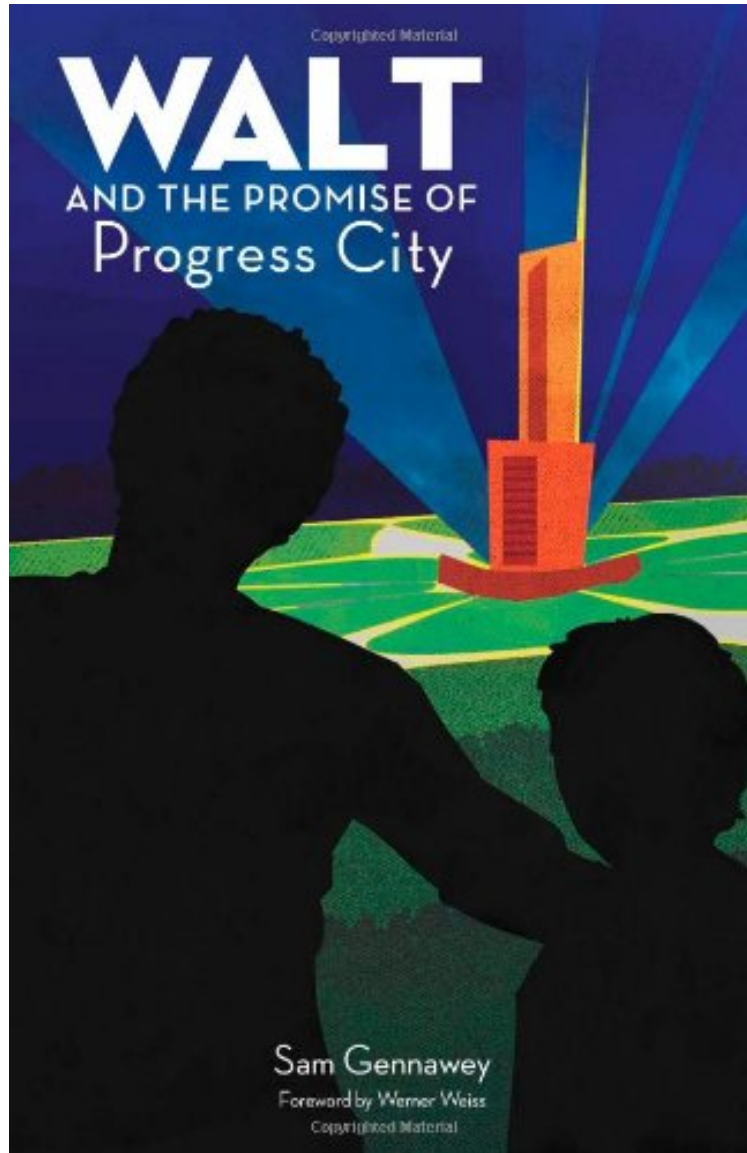


(Download free pdf) Walt and the Promise of Progress City

Walt and the Promise of Progress City

Sam Gennawey

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Sam Gennawey : Walt and the Promise of Progress City before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Walt and the Promise of Progress City:

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Evolutionary, not Revolutionary--the Cities that Walt BuiltBy Alan D. CranfordI took my title for this review from a section title in Chapter 14 and page 269--Walt's city designs evolved. The "revolution" was that Walt's cities worked. Oh, not perfectly--his Burbank studio experienced a labor strike in 1941 that tore the Walt Disney Studios apart, rifts that spawned multiple independent companies, but that also never

healed. Sam Gennaway briefly mentions this strike on page 76 and states that one of the factors leading to that strike beginning May 28 was lack of contact between Walt and his "boys." The worst thing that can happen to government is losing touch with the governed. Being out of touch with the electorate happens to all of our national leaders--when they were in touch to begin with! Though stung by his beloved animators' walk-out and angry demonstrations, Walt did learn one thing from that strike--when he built Disneyland, Walt designed his Disneyland management team's work environment to be in the park, on stage and back stage--and NOT in manager's offices! Walt's first city? Why, the Walt Disney Studios at 2719 Hyperion Avenue, of course--the official home of Disney cartoons from 1926 to 1940. That first city grew up organically, without plan--and the shortcomings and charming inefficiencies of this studio lead to Walt designing a "film machine" from the ground up (page 72), and ever the showman, Walt developed a studio tour on film, "The Reluctant Dragon" (1941)Walt Disney Treasures - Behind the Scenes at the Walt Disney Studio. Walt's Disneyland was a city, too, without permanent residents--only Guests and Cast Members. Little-known CalArts was completed after Walt died--CalArts grew out of Walt's need for an educated animation staff and offers degrees in seven programs: art, design, music, dance, film, video, and theater. Sam Gennaway devoted Chapter 8 (starting on page 155) to CalArts.Walt had even more city planning experience--at levels ranging from dealing with the United States government to carpentry, masonry, and janitorial work. When Walt started his business, he did everything--including windows.Sam Gennaway's "obsession" to learn what motivated Walt Disney to be the most influential urban planner of the 21st Century, and to learn how Walt intended to implement his vision began in 1967 when his mother used Disneyland as a cheap day care center. For \$2.50 a day general admission, Sam and his brothers were someplace safe, someplace that engaged their imaginations, someplace magical. Sam's favorite free attraction: Carousel of Progress. This attraction was featured at the New York 1964-1965 World's Fair and moved to Disneyland afterwards. Today, an updated Carousel of Progress graces Walt Disney World's Magic Kingdom. When Mrs. Gennaway used "Daycare Disneyland" from 1967 to 1973 the ticketing system consisted of a general admission, with A, B, C, D and E Tickets for most of the rides and attractions. Some of the attractions didn't require a ticket. At Carousel of Progress a large 115-foot diorama called Progress City was on display. I was lucky enough to see it in 1972 during my first visit to Disneyland.Sam Gennaway eventually became an urban planner himself. He begins "Walt and the Promise of Progress City" by defining his terms in the Preface and starts with a feature film, "Magic Highways." This "educational" movie was released in 1958 and is as entertaining an artifact today as it was when first released. Sam uses his background and education well, describing the development of 19th, 20th and 21st Century urban planning and how Walt learned to build his cities. I found out that Walt had planned for a second theme park in Anaheim, a California-themed "second gate" to be built in the Disneyland parking lot! His Florida Project took him and his creative Imagineer team away from that second California theme park. Sam discusses the many people who influenced Walt, both positive and negative influences.I have one complaint--no index! There is a comprehensive bibliography, a useful table of contents, but "Walt and the Promise of Progress City" isn't indexed. How about fixing that when the second edition is published?Gennaway spends most of the book building a foundation of knowledge so that Walt's dream of EPCOT is put into context. I recommend a little more research in the history of the 1950's and 1960's too--because otherwise the events leading to the current Walt Disney World won't make sense. I have to applaud Sam's brave decision to trip through time--but he managed to make that history lesson enjoyable for me. Chapter 7 is all about Disneyland and how it set the amusement park industry on its ear. Matter of fact, that "pedestrian mall" called Disneyland demonstrated what a city center could be--establishing the bench mark for clean, safe and friendly. Okay, not everybody plays well with others, and many complain that they feel compelled to conform at Disney theme parks and these tormented souls let the rest of the world know that THEY DON'T LIKE THAT! Disneyland's Main Street USA was influenced by the new enclosed shopping malls--and set the bar higher for commercial and industrial and urban center districts, just as the Walt Disney Studios in Burbank raised the bar for industrial parks. Many of the plans that never became a real "invented place" are almost as impressive as the successful Disney theme parks.Denver is famous for showcasing advanced technology--but in its role as a permanent World's Fair, technology progresses and the installations remain for years, if not decades. Tomorrowland was famous for becoming "Yesterdayland". Today's Epcot suffers from this as well; unfortunately the Carousel of Progress and the diorama of Progress City that captured Sam Gennaway's imagination a half century ago were "updated" because the "cutting edge technologies" showcased became quaint artifacts in museums. The anti-nuclear political movement sank the nuclear power plant planned for EPCOT. Speaking of quaint artifacts, the Monsanto House of the Future has a section in Chapter 15. Don't forget that as laws mutate (mutation is part of evolution) what was possible in politico-legal environments of the past is impossible in today's politico-legal environment. The House of the Future (Disneyland) and the Contemporary Resort (Walt Disney World) showcased innovative pre-fabrication technology that promised to make housing more affordable, easy to update, and the modular design promised great flexibility--but the construction industry is labor intensive. "Labor intensive" spells J-O-B-S. "Labor intensive" spells political careers representing all of these "powerless" workers. Homes are pretty much built the same way they were built in the 1950's, and before. Anybody who has ever had a new home built or who has had their own business NEED to read "Walt and the Promise of Progress City" to find out how Walt managed to lay the foundation for Walt Disney World in a hostile environment.

They might be able to use some of Walt's experience. Examples abound, but let's take the 1960's viewpoint that the land used for the Florida project was stinking swamp and wastelands. Today, urbanite politicians influenced by True Life Adventures have decreed that these are "fragile wetlands" that need the urbanites' "protection" from us nasty humans! On page 328 Sam begins his "The Swamps" by explaining why Walt wanted such inhospitable wastelands--Walt needed a blank canvas to paint the model city. Walt exploited the swamps as a buffer, as a wide, 'impassible' berm that separated the "real world" from the "perfect world." The steps that the Disney Company takes to protect the 'wetland environment' should shame the urbanite protectionist--it doesn't. I know from experience that these urbanites would run screaming from the stinking swamps and from the many things that feast on humans, ranging from microbes to insect life to the mighty alligators. As I said, these urbanites are Disney products themselves whether they admit it or not--they expect the world to conform to their dreams, as did Walt. Unlike Walt, they haven't got a clue how to transform blighted city centers into that Shining City on a Hill--but perhaps some of them are learning. After a journey through the past and through the building blocks of urban development, Sam Gennaway finishes with Chapter 14, describing what Progress City promised, and Chapter 15, a speculative visit to EPCOT during 1982. Walt said that EPCOT would take 15 years to build--but he checked out before the process was completed. That is covered in the Epilogue, briefly describing what happened. The big question at the end: "Would It Have Worked?" Yes, if Walt had two more decades to make it work. That isn't just my conclusion--but Sam Gennaway's and Buzz Price's and a slew of other people much smarter than I. Gennaway quotes the late Buzz Price: "EPCOT would have been more famous than Walt Disney World." Realityland: True-Life Adventures at Walt Disney World Walt Disney Treasures - Tomorrow Land: Disney in Space and Beyond 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. The road to the Experimental Prototype Community of the Future (and the detour to Epcot) By Doc Watson Those of us who are of a certain age may well recall going to Disneyland and taking the escalator to the second floor of the Carousel of Progress show to look at the model of "Progress City", a bright, shining city of the future made possible by modern technology and careful planning. It was impressive and beckoning--fantastically cool to my young eyes, like a detailed, futuristic model railroad layout. I loved it, and as author Sam Gennaway describes it, so did he. It inspired in him both an interest in urban planning and high hopes for Walt Disney's idea for the creation of a real place very much like it. "Walt and the Promise of Progress City" presents Disney not just as a talented storyteller and master showman, but as a deeply contemplative and practical visionary interested in creating a new style of city. Gennaway provides us with an examination of Walt Disney's relationship to space and place and describes how he became an innovator in theme parks and beyond. This was accomplished through thoughtful attention to detail, an understanding of how space is used and the manner people enter and move through it, and the way in which immersive physical environments create the sense of wonder and well-being we often associate with going to a Disney park. In 15 chapters and an epilogue, the author tracks Disney's developing interest in urban design and planning from almost the very beginning of his career. Along the way, Gennaway touches on nearly all of Walt's creations, from his studio complex in Burbank, his backyard model railroad, CalArts, and, of course, Disneyland, and places them as stepping stones to a larger urban vision: E.P.C.O.T. (Experimental Prototype Community of Tomorrow). This was not the theme park that was eventually built in Walt Disney World, but an actual community where people would live and work. How this ambitious concept morphed into the Epcot we now have makes up a significant portion of the book. Whether Walt saw things as systematically is open to question, but by creating this mosaic, Gennaway has the workaround opportunity to examine Walt's creations of all sorts--the World's Fair of 1964 attractions, the planned but never built Mineral King resort in the Sierras, and earlier abortive attempts at creating a new urban model prior. Readers curious about the conceptualization and creation of any of those projects will find something of interest in this book. While I have read a fair amount on the design and conceptualization of Disneyland, Gennaway delves into the subject on a deeper level and provided me with a greater insight into the success of the park. It takes a serious look at the ideas and philosophies that informed the men that created Disneyland and WDW and the techniques and methods they employed. This is probably not a book for the casual fan of Disneyland, Walt Disney World or Epcot, and it's not something kids are going to enjoy. This is something of a scholarly work, well researched (there are even footnotes) and informative. That is not to say it's dry, because it is not. Myself, I found it fascinating. My only real caveat about the book is the total lack of any sort of diagrams, which would have been immensely useful in illustrating some of the concepts Gennaway is talking about, or photos, which would have shown how these concepts were realized in the completed projects. This is an obvious and major omission that holds back a very good book from being an excellent one. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Good but I'd like a little more information By Carl This book is good and offers some great information that I learned from. As someone who is already a fan of Disney and had already seen the EPCOT film much of the information was review of things I already knew. However, this was painted in the light of urban planning. The first 2/3 or so of the book discussed Walt's prior successes with urban design (CalArts, Disneyland, his home, etc), and how these prior experiences influenced the design of EPCOT. So far so good. My main complaint isn't about anything incorrect in the book itself, it is in what I think the book is lacking. First of all, I think that the book would be greatly improved if there were pictures. For instance, a whole chapter is devoted to the "Wizard of Bras porch" in Disneyland. However, I don't know what this porch looks like from the top of my head and a picture would have been perfect to let

me see what the author was describing. Pictures throughout the book would have been nice, especially (and in particular) for EPCOT. The other thing that I think the book is lacking is reference to other planned communities/urban design projects outside of Disney (other than Radburn). In the UAE "Masdar", a carbon free master planned city built from the ground up is currently under construction. Similarly, the planned city of Dongtan in China is supposed to be a planned eco-community in the East. How does EPCOT compare to other master planned communities- where other people have tried to tackle the same challenges that Walt Disney did? All in all I thought it was a good read although slightly lacking. EPCOT would certainly have been Walt Disney's greatest achievement and what he would have been most famous for had he lived to see it completed. While the idea of EPCOT was novel in the 1960s, this idea is more pertinent today than ever. We are being told that we need to change our ways/consumptive patterns. Science has offered us technological/policy solutions that they say will solve our problems, but they are hardly if ever implemented for fear of cost/public acceptance/or otherwise. An experimental community such as EPCOT would have been very relevant and important in today's world because there is simply nothing like it. Will an experimental community such as EPCOT ever get built? Maybe- it's something that has never been done before and people always like to do what has never been done. However, even though I think it's possible that this type of community could be built I don't think anyone would want to risk the venture for many decades or a century at least. As for the book itself though, it was a good read. However, I learned more about urban design concepts than I actually did about EPCOT itself. A good source for learning about EPCOT is to watch the original EPCOT film or to even check out the Wikipedia page for the EPCOT concept.

In the middle of Central Florida swamplands and ranch property, Walt Disney aspired to build the greatest American city ever conceived--EPCOT. While Disney would die before realizing this epic achievement, he still left behind the blueprint for one of the boldest and most unique projects ever proposed on American soil. Walt and the Promise of Progress City is an amazing new book that explores how Walt Disney--the master of fiction--was determined to bring new life to the non-fiction world of city design and development and, in doing so, fundamentally improve the Great American way of life. This 374-page paperback by Sam Gennawey explores Walt Disney's vision for a city of tomorrow, EPCOT, and how this great city would be a way for American corporations to demonstrate how technology, creative thinking, and hard work could change the world. Quite simply, Disney saw this project as a way to influence the public's expectations about city life, in the same way his earlier work had redefined what it meant to watch an animated film or visit an amusement park. Gennawey, a professional planner and highly-respected theme park and attractions industry expert, also breaks new ground in detailing the process through which meaningful and functional spaces have been created by Walt Disney and his artists as well as how guests understand and experience those spaces. Gennawey has spent years researching the history of EPCOT and Walt Disney's love for city planning while interviewing a wide variety of key players familiar with Walt and his vision for EPCOT. Disney Legend Marty Sklar says;

From the Author Disney Legend Marty Sklar