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Jack Lindquist enjoyed the ballet with the Shah of Iran, convinced Gene Autry to sell the Anaheim Angels to The Disney Company, and was gently reprimanded by Imelda Marcos. Throughout his thirty-eight year career with The Disney Company, starting out as the first advertising manager of Disneyland just months after its opening to ending his career as the first president of the park, Jack took risks some successful, some not so successful but always with his characteristic humor and joie de vivre. Disneyland and Walt Disney World serve as the backdrop for Jack's experiences, as he established himself as a maverick and helped form a large slice of Americana dominated by Disney. When Jack wasn't rubbing shoulders with the movers and shakers of every decade that he worked for the Disney Company, he was busy creating Disney Dollars and Date Nite. He recounts all of this and more, including his humorous mistakes, in this touching memoir, *In Service to the Mouse*.

In Service to the Mouse: My Unexpected Journey to Becoming Disneyland's First President: A Memoir Details

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Richard Kelly says

Memoirs. This is essentially a bunch of fun stories from Mr. Lindquist's time at Disney. It is rather interesting. Parts are fun, but unless you are either a Disney fanatic or looking for marketing people's bios this one will probably bore you.

I had a fun time reading it with it's short chapters, but it could have used a little more about day to day life.

Mark Baker says

The memories of the man who rose from head of advertising for Disneyland in 1955 to become its first president in the late 80's and early 90's. As a Disnerd, I loved this inside look at the park's history, although the writing style could have been a little better.

Read my full review at Carstairs Considers.

Michael says

I was looking for a quick enjoyable read and I found it with *In Service to the Mouse: My Unexpected Journey to Becoming Disneyland's First President*. Jack Lindquist shares stories from his time working at Disneyland when the park was still under construction. The format of the book is great because it is done in short chapters with each one focusing on one topic. It still follows a chronological order but it is not bogged down with unneeded facts.

Lindquist shares stories of Disneyland's early years when celebrities and politicians would flock to the park and Disney would use the photo opts to promote the park to people around the country. He also tells of how Disney World in Florida was developed and his role in creating it and helping to conduct the grand opening. Some of the interesting topics for me involve his flying around the world to get countries to agree to be part of the Epcot Center's World Showcase Plaza.

The other interesting part of this book that carries throughout is that Lindquist is not afraid to speak his mind even if it is not in lock step with Disney. One chapter is his thoughts on how Main Street USA at Disneyland is out of touch with visitors to the park today. He believes that the street needs to be updated from the 1920s and 30s to the 1960s or 70s so that parents coming in today with their kids can say, "I remember this from when I was a kid."

He also think that California Adventure was a HUGE mistake for a few reasons the biggest one being the park was located in California. His idea for the park was to be a throwback to a classic beach side amusement park. His description of what he thought it should be made it sound like a really great amusement

park.

If you're interested in the history of Disneyland, and to a lesser degree Disney World, this book would be interesting to you. As I stated earlier the style that the book is written in makes it a great book to pick up read a chapter or two quickly and then put down to come back to later.

Patti says

OK, my review will be biased because I am a sucker for anything Disney related. Met Mr. Linquist at Destination D in Orlando, FL. He even autographed my book! A great read for any Disney fan, especially anyone that loves Disneyland. The book tells of Jack's rise in the company, to running the Happiest Place on Earth in the early days.

Nicholas Lubofsky says

This is an absolutely delightful collection of vignettes about the planning, running, and marketing of the most important amusement park, from a man who was an integral player in bringing it to life. What a fun book! I recommend it to anyone who's ever been — or has ever wanted to go — to the happiest place on Earth, Disneyland.

Christina says

An interesting history narrated by a tool

I finished this book because the history of Disney is interesting, but reading it was awful. The book was terribly written - the sections are meaningless, sentences unfinished and the language doesn't always make sense.

Meanwhile time in was reading in thought of that Simpsons joke: old man yells at cloud. Every anecdote was about how Jack being a jerk was heroic but then he left and things changed and that was bad. Sometimes it was because the world changed, which he hated. Sometimes because the company changed, which was wrong.

I should have skipped this book and found another source for Disney history.

Tyler Daddario says

This was an incredible book. Lindquist's journey through his time with Disney is hilarious, touching, and heartfelt. I loved reading this book with my morning coffee. The perfect start to my day!

Louis Prosperi says

A great book with lots of behind-the-scenes stories about Disneyland, Walt Disney World, and other Disney-related ventures, written by someone who was there from the early days.

The subtitle is a little mis-leading in that the author was involved in a LOT more than just Disneyland, including the early days of Walt Disney World, lining up countries for World Showcase in EPCOT Center, Disney's purchase of the Queen Mary and the Anaheim Angels, and others.

One theme that shows up frequently is that the Marketing/Promotions group were constantly creating events and special promotions to draw audiences to the park. This highlighted for me the idea that Disneyland's audience is more skewed towards local people than Walt Disney World. While WDW certainly has promotional events, it seems that they are more prevalent at Disneyland due to the local nature of its audience. I suppose the fact that Disneyland is nearer to a larger population base than WDW is a factor here, but I still found it interesting.

It's interesting to read about Disney executives and employees engaging in un-Disneylike behavior (drinking, partying, etc.) on business trips, but I suppose that is to be expected. Still, it struck me while I was reading.

A couple of specific bits that I found especially interesting were the fact that while the author was a long-time proponent of a second gate at Disneyland, he believes that building California Adventure was a mistake, and that Disney should have instead built a second EPCOT-like park (such as the WestCOT park that had been planned at one point). I also liked the part where the author talks about urging Michael Eisner to write an open letter to Wall Street about the absurdity of expecting corporations to have 15% growth every quarter and Wall Street's mis-guided focus on short-term results over long-term success.

I found the author's ideas about periodically updating Main Street, U.S.A. to keep it roughly 40 years behind the current times an interesting notion, but I think doing so would risk causing Main Street to lose its charm and atmosphere of reassurance.

I recommend this book to any fan of Disney theme parks, especially those who are interested in learning a little more about the behind-the-scenes business side of Disney's park operations.

Howard says

Well I really liked it. Of course he was my boss and he gave me a copy and wrote inside it to me, "Thank you for making the magic to happen." That mean tons to me. Each chapter is about 4 pages long and I remember many of the things that he writes about. I love the ones that he wrote about when he started there and I was but a nipper. Still lot's of booze and many practical jokes. My Mother always asks "Why did you ever leave?". Jack made me. He said, "Disney is fine but you are made to make a difference.". I wasn't happy about it but we talked recently. Jack didn't say I told you so. He told me, "Don't slack off! You have much to do.". I said as always to this great man, "Yes Sir!".

Alicia Von says

A little light, but really wonderful stories from someone who was there at the beginning of it all.

BrandyLee says

I enjoyed the stories of Disneyland's past and the concise, short storytelling style. Each story is only a few pages long, making it an easy story to read in small chunks.

I found much of the personal leaning to be outdated and surprising in many cases. Very much a young person listening to an old man and thinking "you can't things like that anymore". Still an interesting perspective from a major figure in Disneyland history.

alicia says

The best Disney book I have read so far. It had a nice blend of both the creative and the business aspects that went into making Disney such a success. What I loved most was the author's point of how everything great that came out of the company happened by taking chances, listening to crazy ideas, and letting people be as creative as they could.

Rob Conner says

I really enjoyed this book simply because of my love of Disney and Disney History. The book is written as a transcribed narrative, which you find out by reading the "About the Author" page. Melinda Combs helped Jack Lindquist with writing his memoir, and it shows in the style. The book really read like I was sitting down with my grandfather and listening to him tell me stories about his time with Disney. There is no general flow to the book, it jumps from story to story in short 5-10 page chapters. There is a chronological order to the story, but it not tied together as a narrative.

I am a huge Disney fan, and so this wasn't a big deal to me. I enjoyed all of Mr. Lindquist's stories and wished he had more to say about the day to day life in the park. There were a couple stories that seemed to strain the family appropriate nature of the book, but overall I would say most of the book is great for all ages. The only other thing I would note is that Jack definitely writes this to put a positive spin on Disney and himself, which makes sense. He brings up a few ideas he did not get approved, but I would also have enjoyed more stories about failed projects or stories about some of the more of the negative stories about Disney.

That's not really in the spirit of the book however, it is an upbeat retelling of some of the more memorable parts of Jack's career with Disney. If you like Disney History this is a quick read and a nice addition to your collection. It requires NO major commitment, so please read if you can. I'd only recommend it to fans of Disney, since that is the focus of the entire book.

Rebekah Schiffman says

This is a fun book full of little stories of how Disneyland came to be the park that we love so much.

Hayden says

My first exposure to Jack Lindquist was a film documentary celebrating the first 50 years of Disneyland, titled, “Disneyland: Secrets, Stories, and Magic.” Jack sat aboard the Mark Twain Riverboat, and was interviewed about all he saw in his 38 years with Disney, (and one can’t help but be intrigued by a man with the title of “Former President of Disneyland!”). He was named Disneyland’s first advertising manager in 1955, became its Director of Marketing 10 years later, was an invaluable asset in the creation of Walt Disney World, foundational to securing sponsorship from various countries for the World Showcase at Epcot; he topped of his tenure with nearly 4 years as the first President of the Disneyland Resort from ’90-’94. With a career like that, which Disneylander WOULDN’T want to read his memoirs?

The real treat of this memoir is not so much the innumerable, delightful stories of Disneyland and Walt Disney World that you’re most likely reading about for the first time, but the fact that you’re being told them by one of Disneyland’s greatest personalities. Jack, to say the least, is an absolute hoot. Each chapter is a small vignette of his Disney story, with a story or two contained in each chapter, and (thank heavens) is all largely arranged chronologically (a luxury I’m afraid many memoirs are void of).

For anyone looking for a new perspective on Disneyland, Walt Disney World, or general Walt Disney Company history, you simply must add this to your library. The history that is presented within is so unlike any narrative on Disneyland Park specifically I’ve read before. The history of such is so often (and understandably) contextualized within the life of Walt Disney, but this memoir certainly is separated from such. The book begins at Disneyland’s beginning, and continues well on past Walt’s death. You’re going to read a perspective on the park that you haven’t often read of before. One of my initial hesitations with this book (since a majority of the pieces I have read on Disneyland are written from an Imagineering perspective) was that Jack’s take would be less artistic and more business. Be that as it may, you will be just as fascinated by the creativity and brilliance of many of Jack and his advertising team’s ideas and concepts (for example, the spur-of-the-moment decision to have the Super Bowl’s MVP announce the now-famous line, “I’m going to Disneyland!”)

I feel it should be noted that the memoir contains a subtle “discomfort” throughout. It certainly is concise, heart-warming, and fantastically hilarious, but Jack is not in the least bit quiet in regards to his dissatisfaction with some of the practices and mentalities he feels existed at Disneyland in its later years, and continue to persist into its current state. He isn’t complaining, no... and I feel the provoking points he brings up are ones that each Disneyland-loving man should consider (i.e. the current state of character merchandising, the stagnant condition of Main Street, USA, etc.). Jack questions all decisions made at the park quite diplomatically, and although his memoir proves that each of his decisions aren’t the best decisions, it proves all the greater that when Jack found success, he really hit it out of the park, so to speak; you can’t help but think that the guy’s doubts and concerns he has have a little more weight to them than we might suppose.
