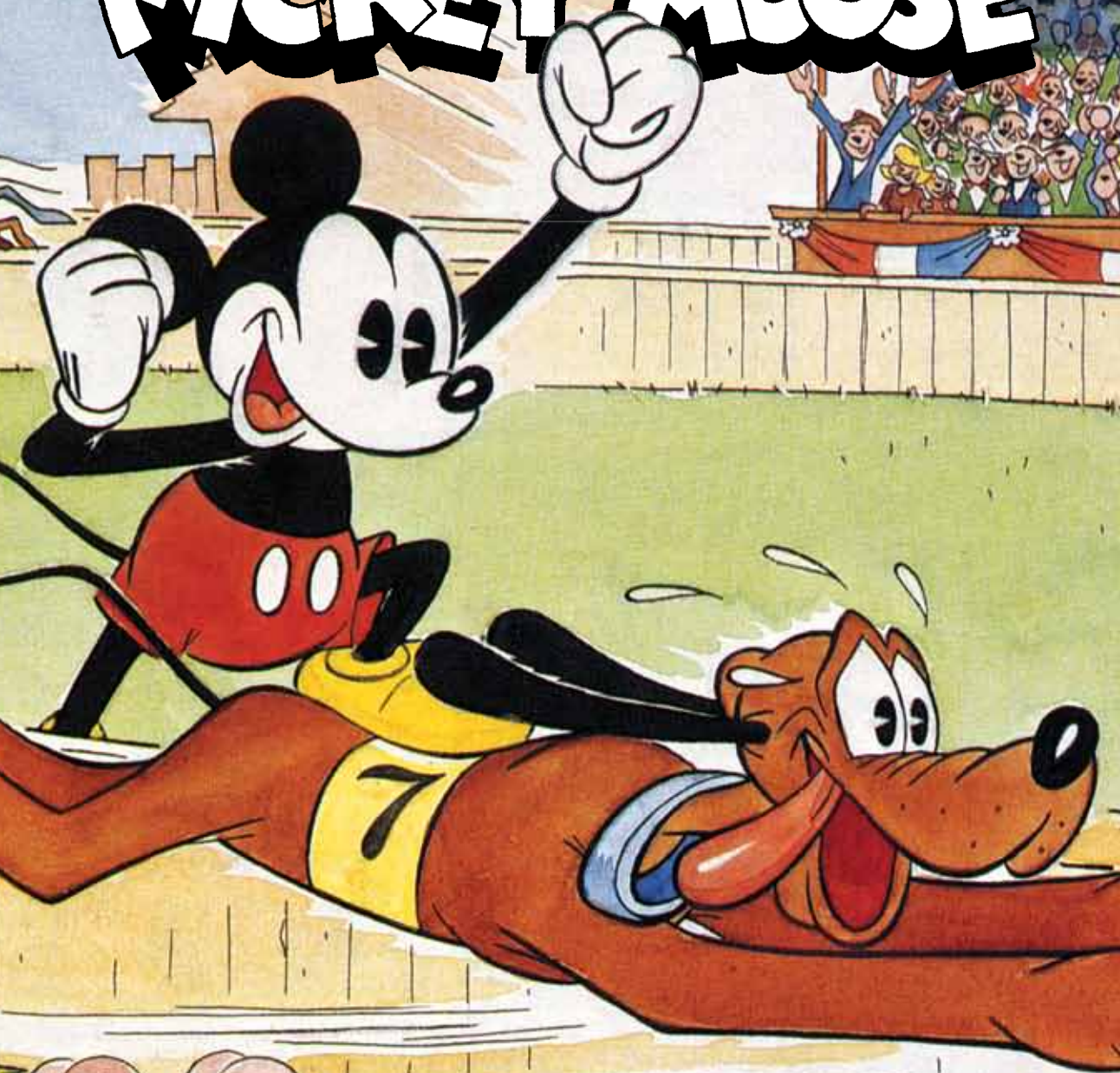


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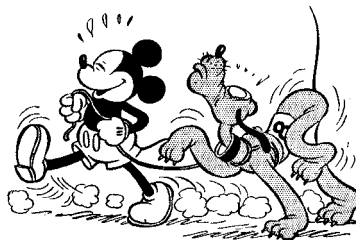
WALT DISNEY'S MICKEY MOUSE



**BY FLOYD
GOTTFREDSON**

FANTAGRAPHICS BOOKS

MICKEY MOUSE: A HOUND FOR TROUBLE



>>INTRODUCTION BY DAVID GERSTEIN

WHAT KIND OF HERO is Mickey Mouse? While we all know Mickey as a famous cartoon star, many perceive him today as a simple children's entertainer: a good-natured, parental kind of mouse who rarely gets into stressful scrapes. Such a hero is just fine for preschool fans. But Mickey Mouse was born a star for *all* ages. And nobody knew that like Floyd Gottfredson (1905-1986), longtime creator of Mickey's daily comic strip!

Instead of a genial adult authority figure, the comics Mickey is what Floyd called "a mouse against the world": a stubbornly optimistic, imperfect but determined youth struggling to prove himself in thrilling, chilling surroundings. And facing funny business along the way—because an earnest, struggling underdog can get into awfully embarrassing scrapes!

Floyd's Mickey Mouse is the legendary Mickey who battled Pegleg Pete on fighter planes and escaped from the Phantom Blot's deathtraps. And tried to get out of modeling dresses for Minnie... "doggone th' luck!"

Ironically, Gottfredson at first tried to get out of working on *Mickey Mouse* comics! Walt Disney moved Floyd onto them in May 1930, when early strip artist Win Smith left the studio. Gottfredson—an animator at the time—asked Walt to hurry and find someone who could take the strip over from him.

But Floyd swiftly saw that comics were his forte. "After two months," he later remembered, "I began to worry that [Walt] might actually find someone!" Floyd eventually plotted the strip through 1943 and drew it until 1975—an incredible accomplishment!

Apart from turning Mickey into a two-fisted adventurer, Gottfredson created classic co-stars for

Mickey's world: ex-con Butch, future-man Eega Beeva, supergenius Dr. Einmug—and the Phantom Blot, of course! Floyd's new characters were backed up by his great characterizations of Minnie, Goofy, Horace Horsecollar, Clarabelle Cow...

...and Pluto! Infamous for stealing the show on-screen, the gangly yellow dog was a far better complement to Mickey in the comics, where Floyd made each character sympathetic in his own way. While the cartoon Pluto acted like a curious child—and often, inadvertently, cast Mickey as a bossy parent—Floyd carefully switched back and forth between viewpoint characters, making sure we felt for Mickey as well as for his pooch.

In this issue's "Pluto the Racer" (1935), mutt and master face the ultimate test—when Pluto's sporting career pits our boys against crooked racetrack gamblers! Striking out against social ills, Gottfredson exposed cruelty to animals in Mickey's world—in the hopes that readers would fight it in ours. Floyd's villainous dogpark con men, illegally using sedatives to make the racers dog-tired, surely reflected real-life bad guys, themselves.

Of course, that's not to call our adventure all morals and no fun. "Pluto the Racer" runs with the comedy of a pro and the speed of a doggone gone dog.

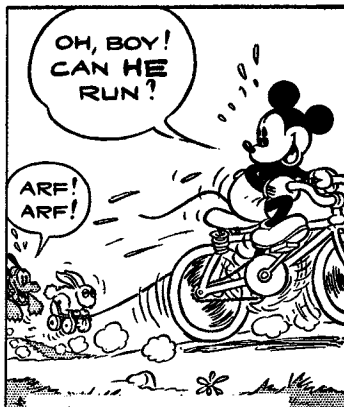
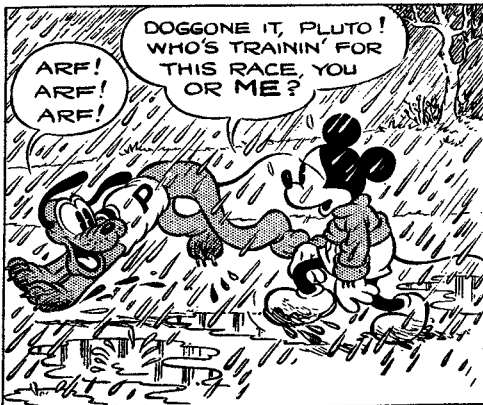
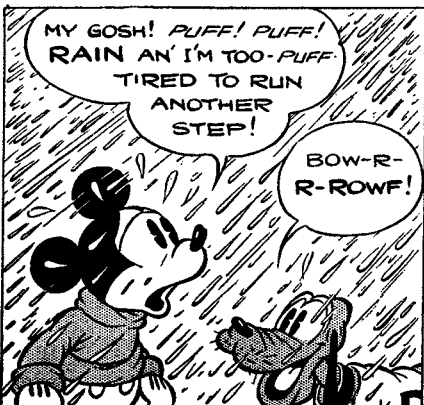
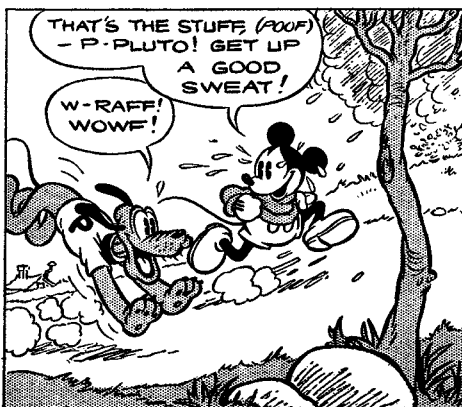
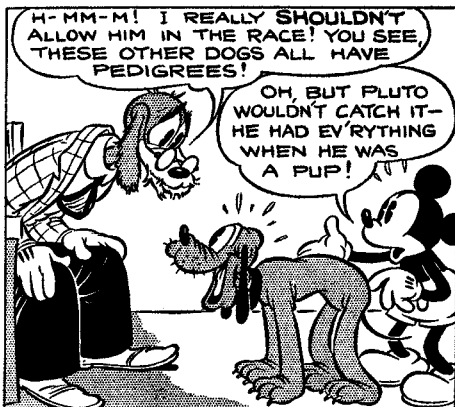
(And hey, speaking of dogs, who's the mischievous "Dippy Dawg" helping Mickey with a prank? You might know him better under the name he adopted later—gawrsh! It's Goofy!) •

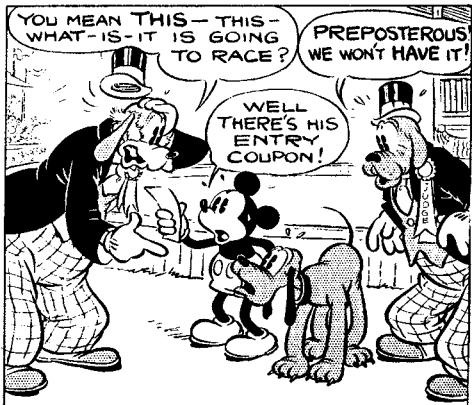
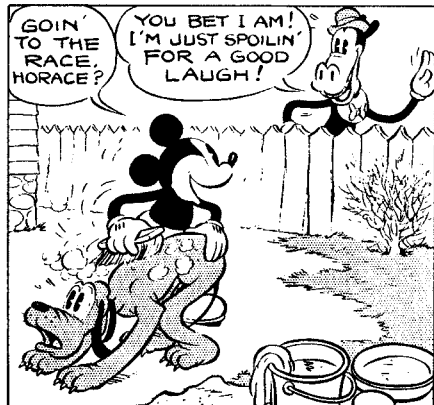
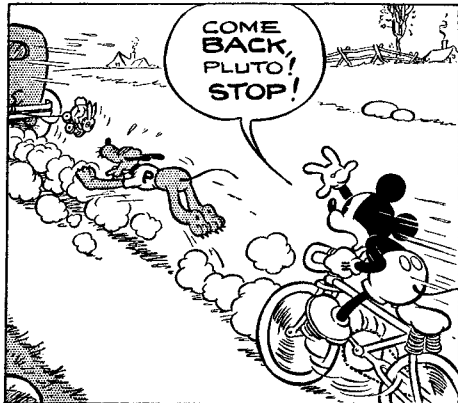
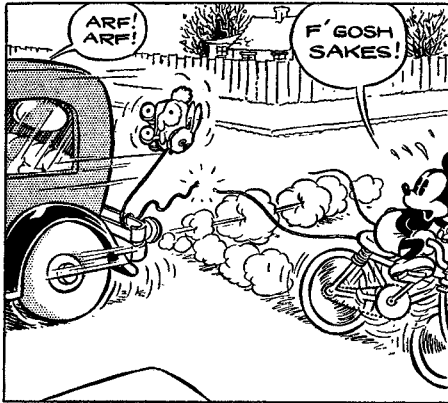
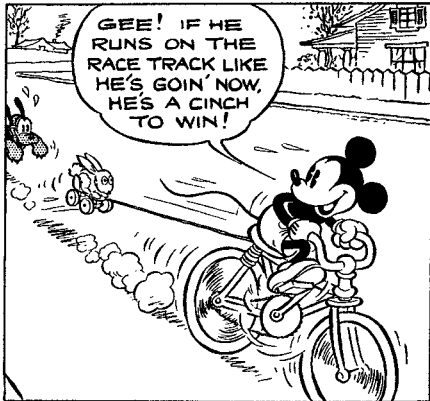
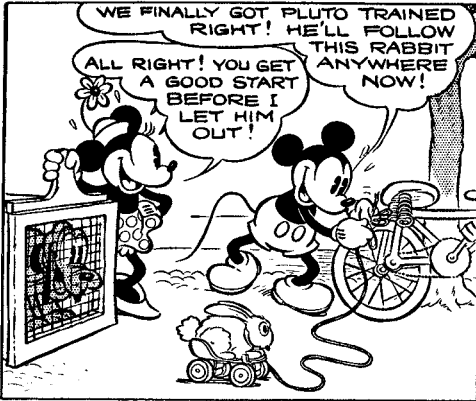
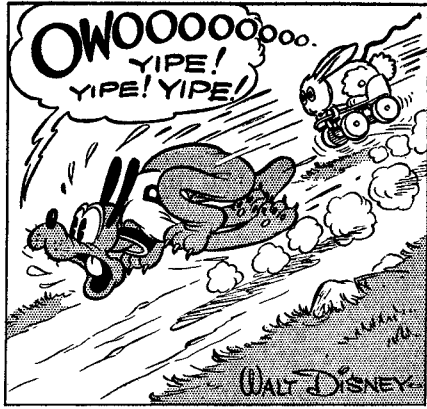
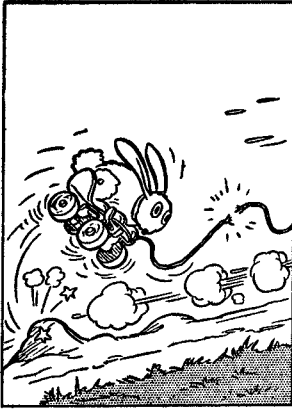
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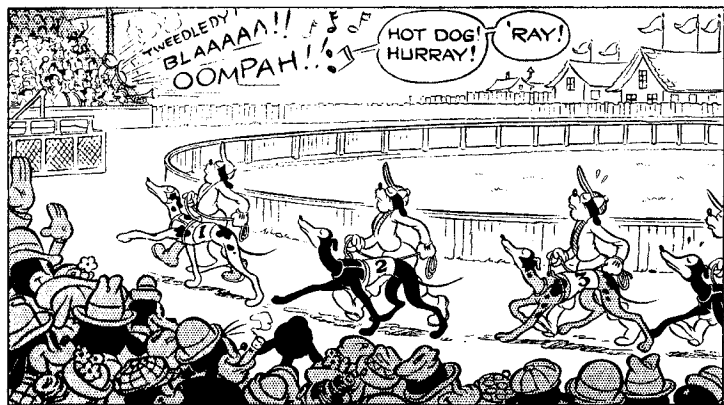
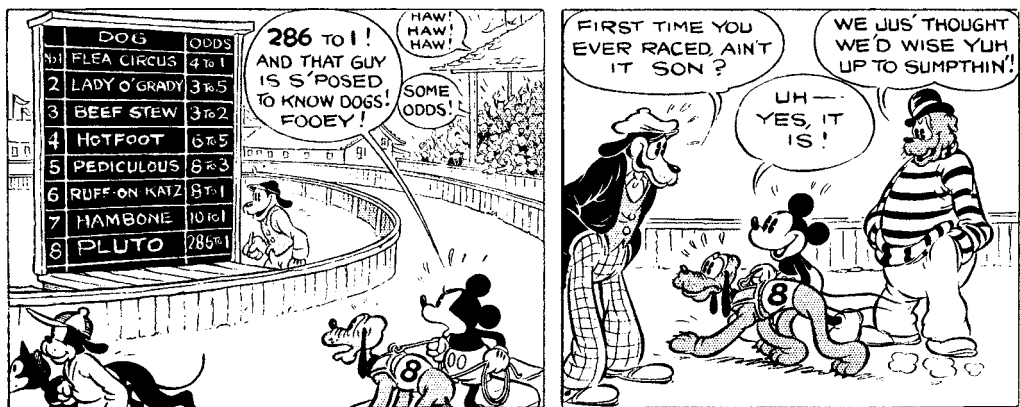
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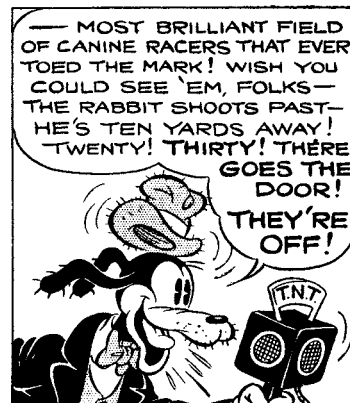
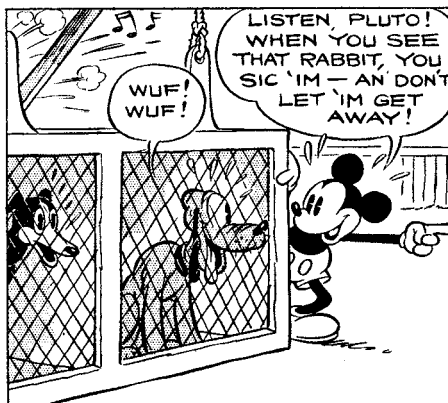
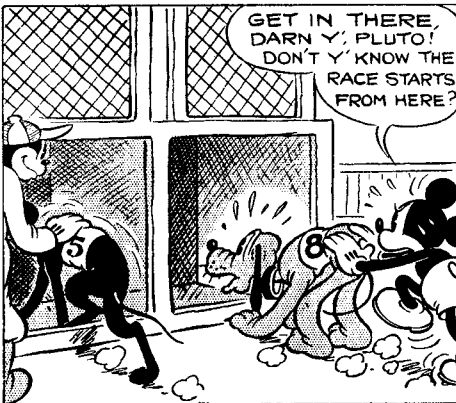
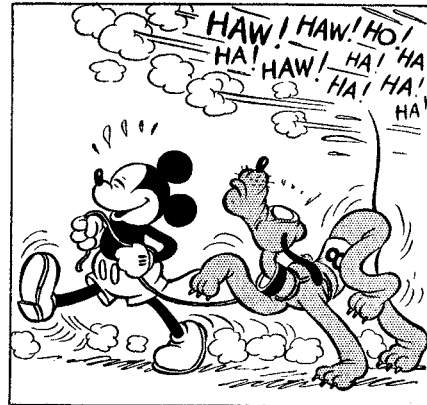
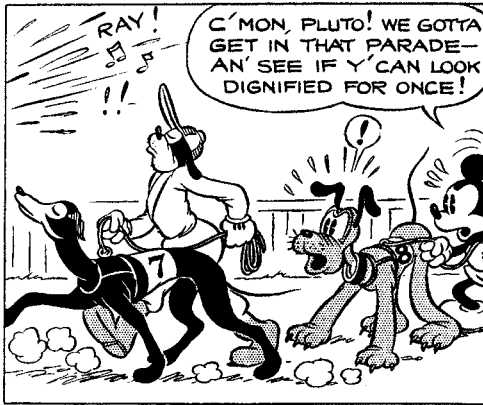
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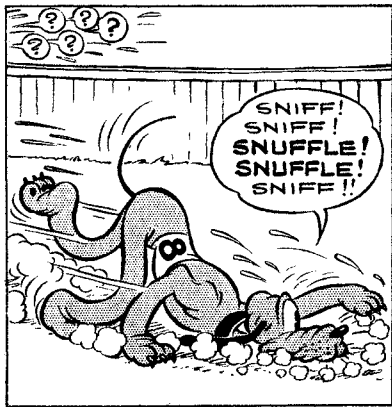
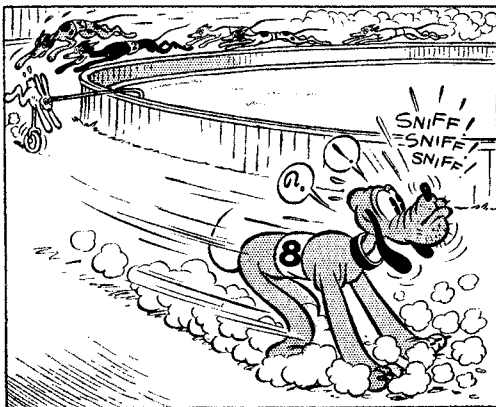
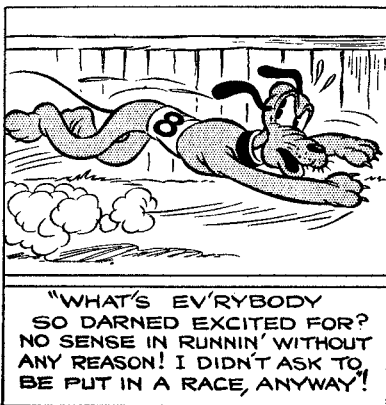
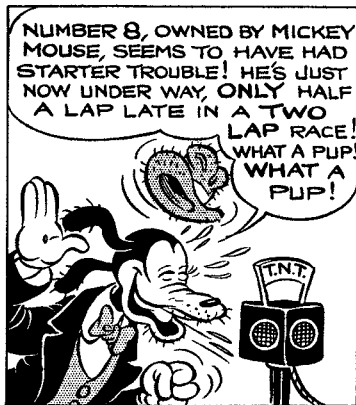
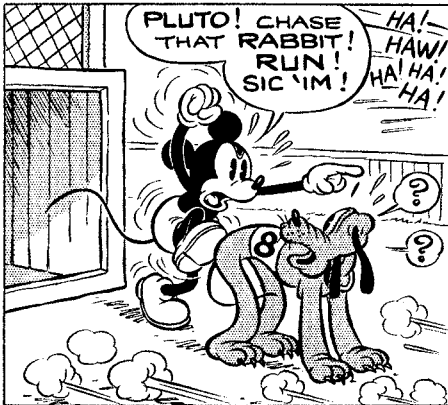
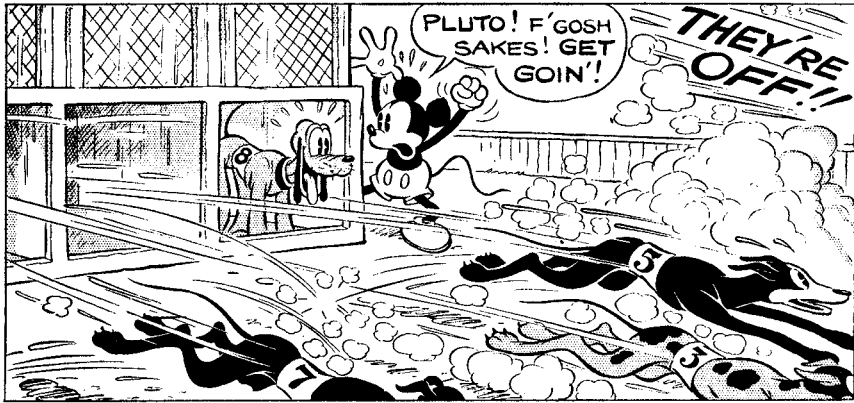


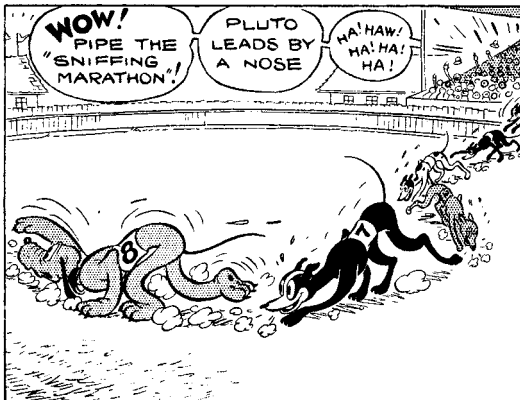
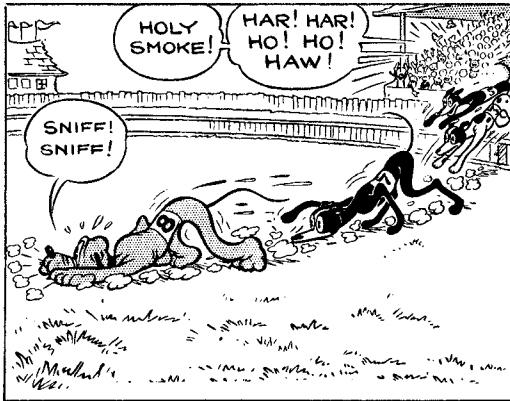
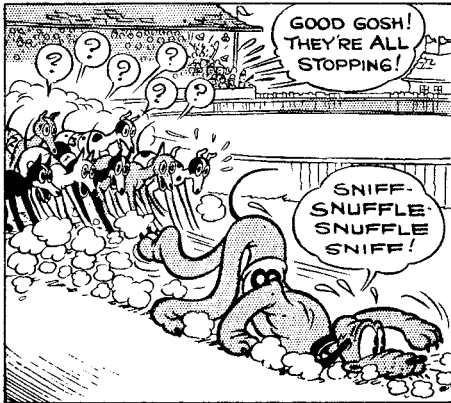
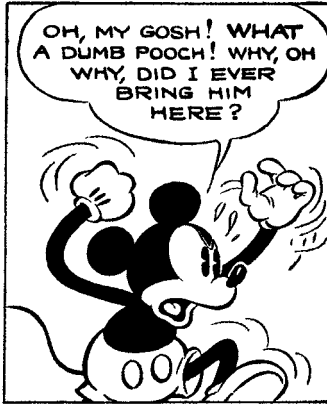
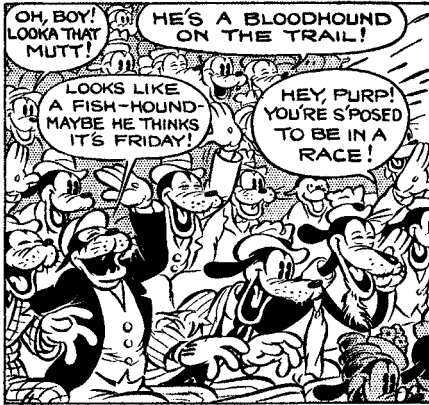


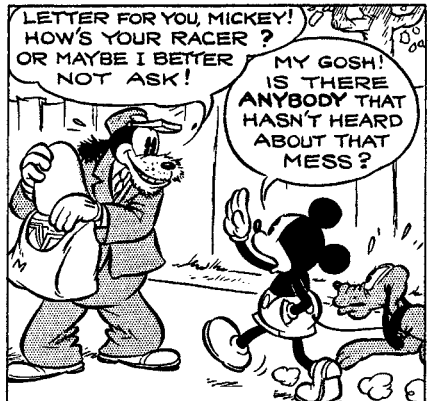
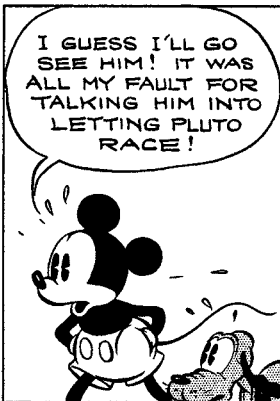
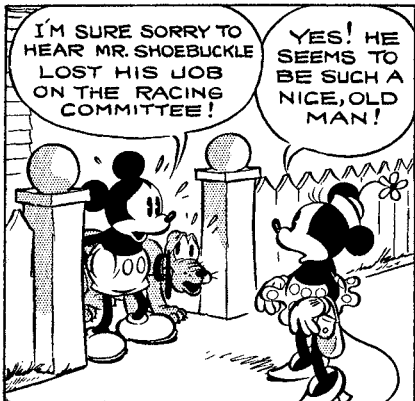
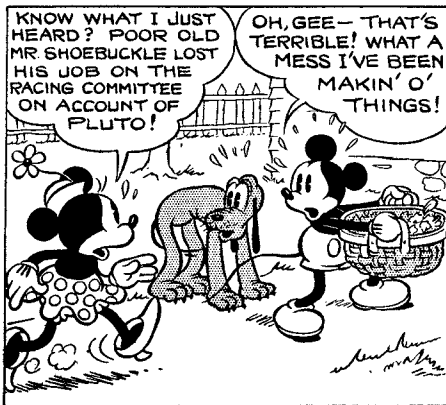
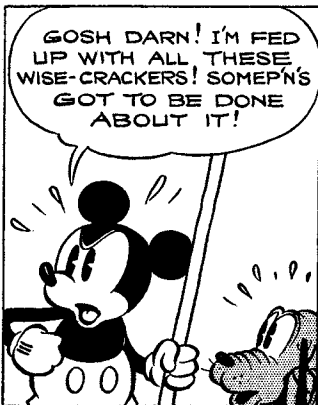
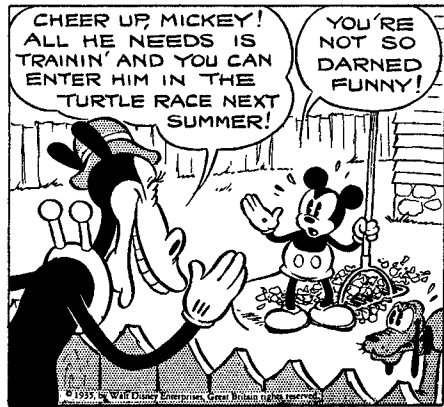
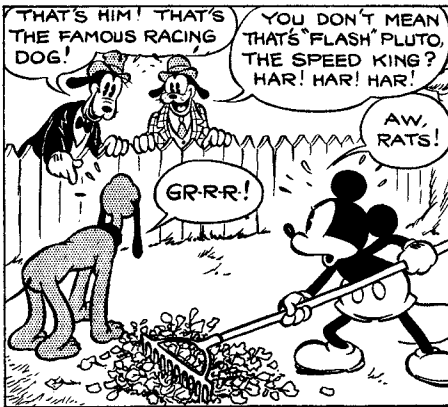
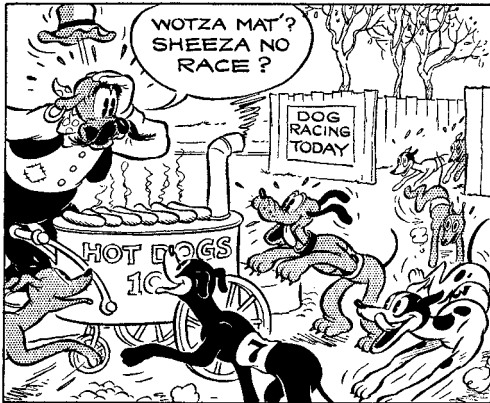
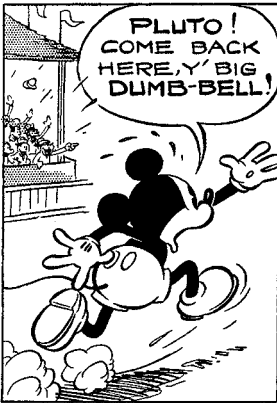


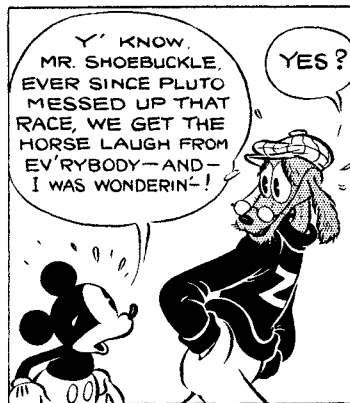
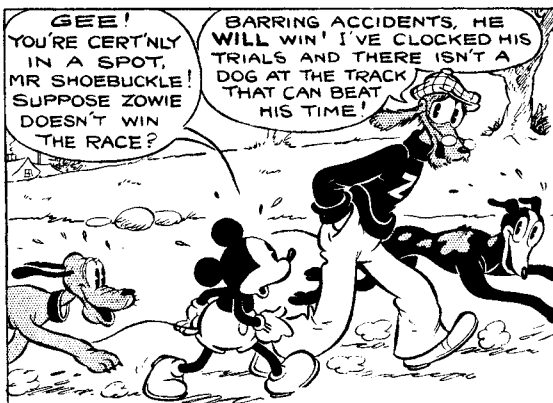
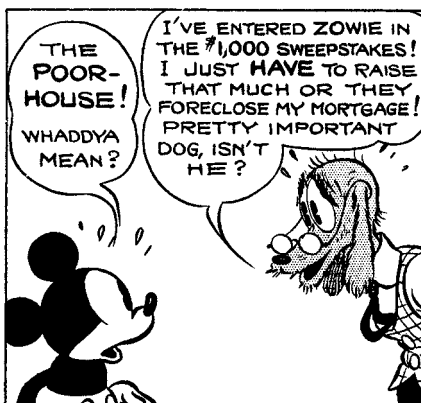
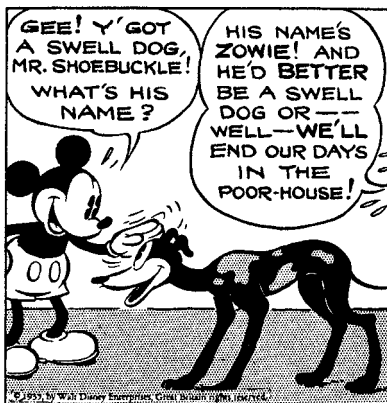
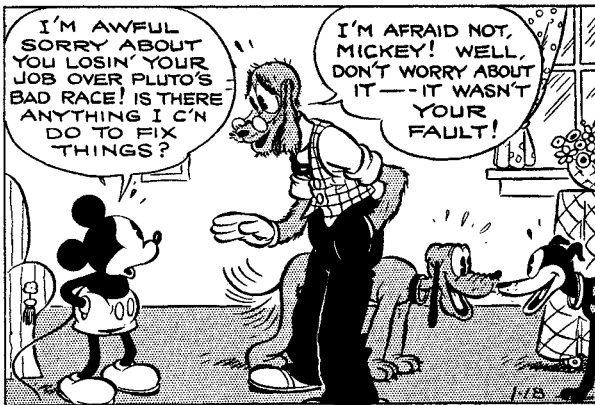
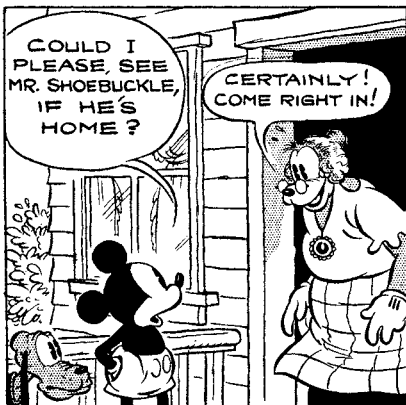
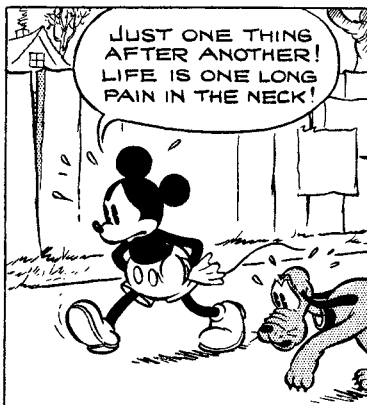
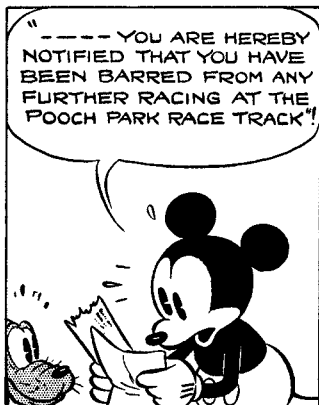


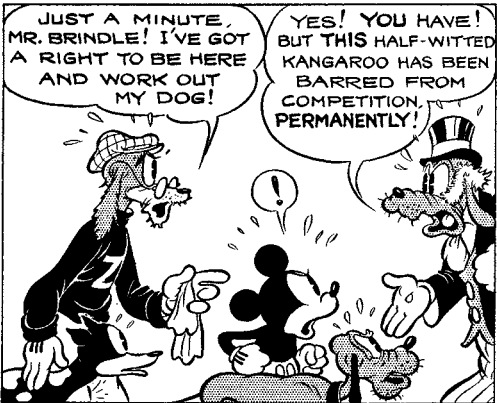
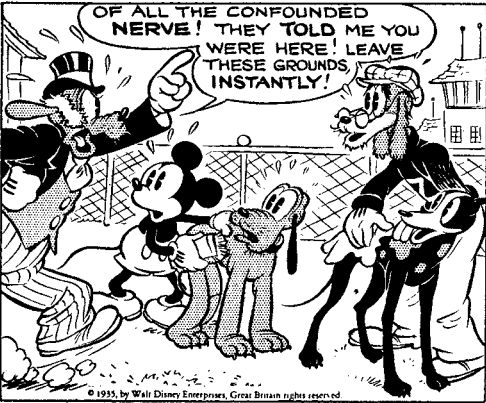
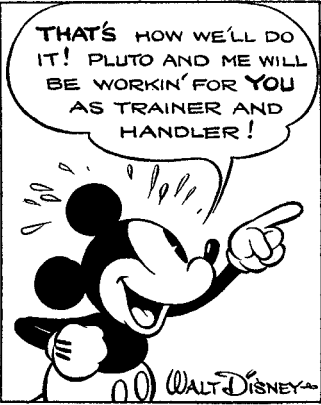
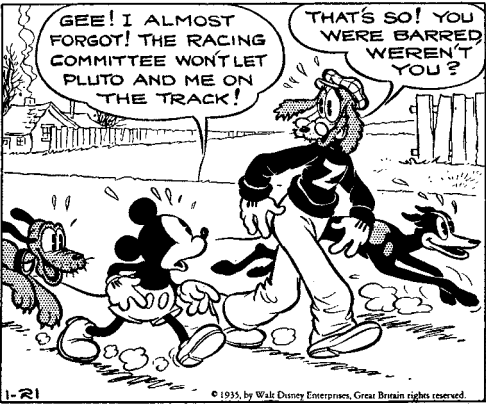
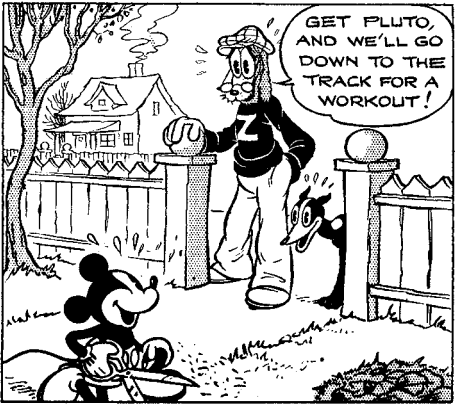
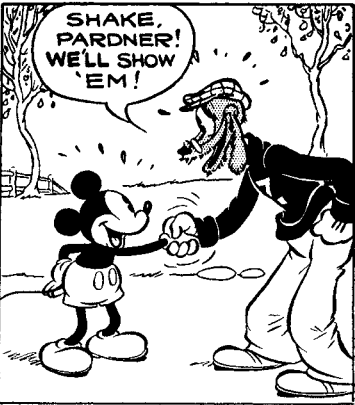
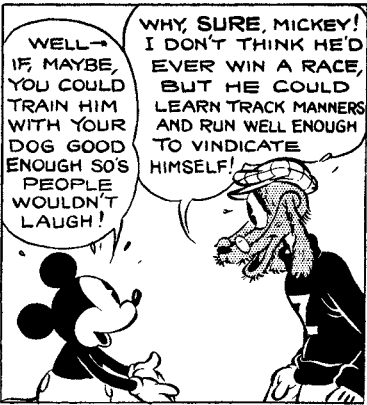


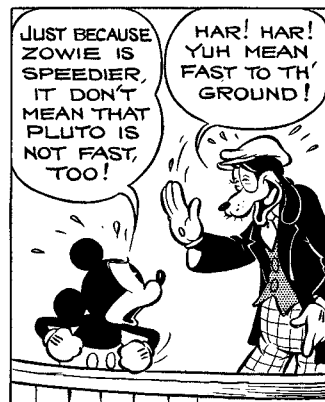
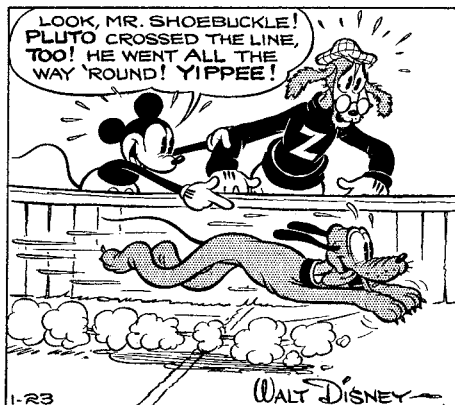
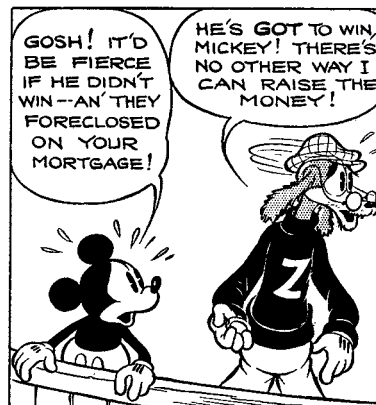
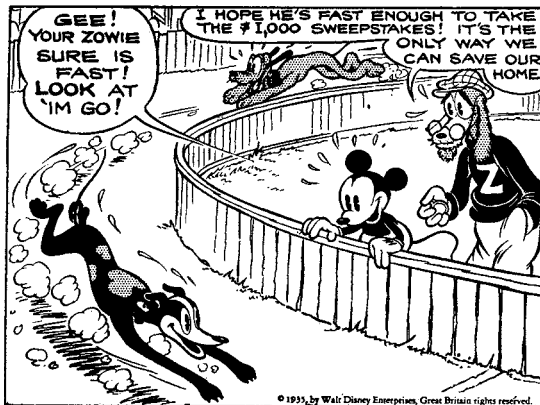
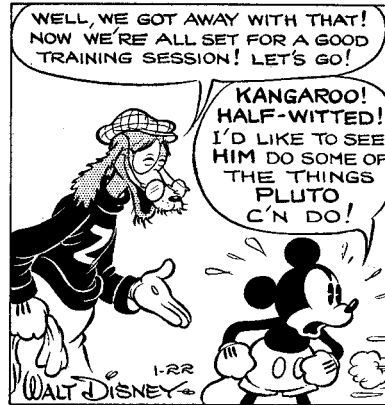


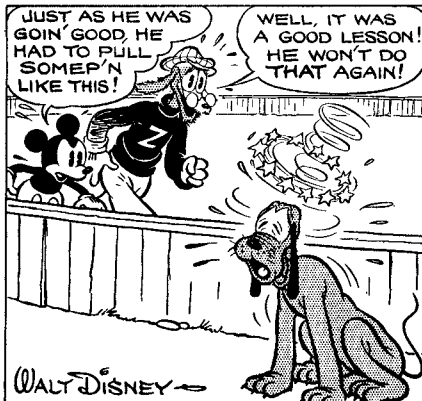
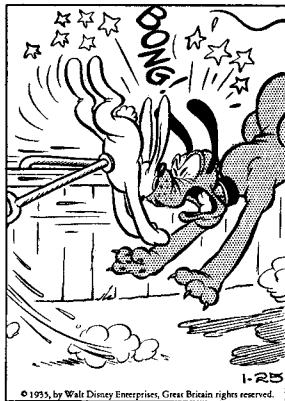
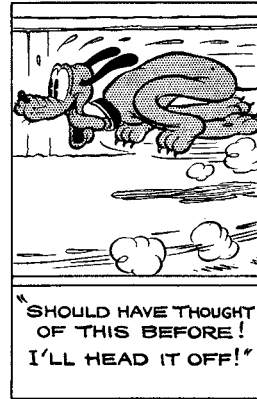
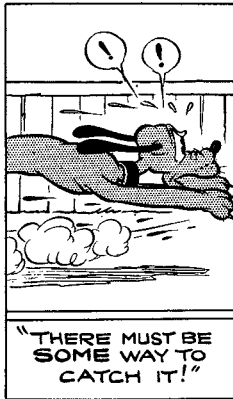
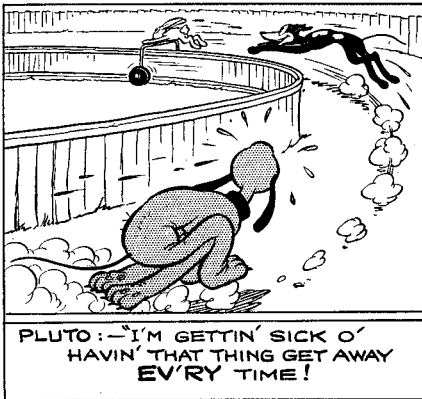
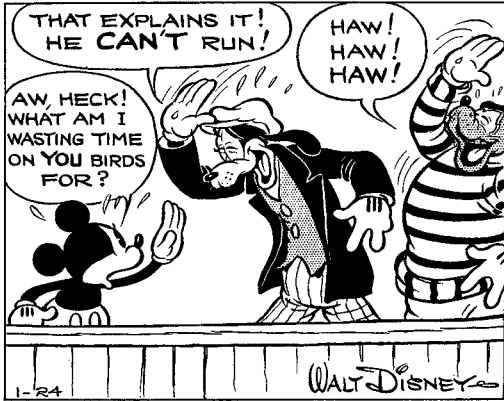


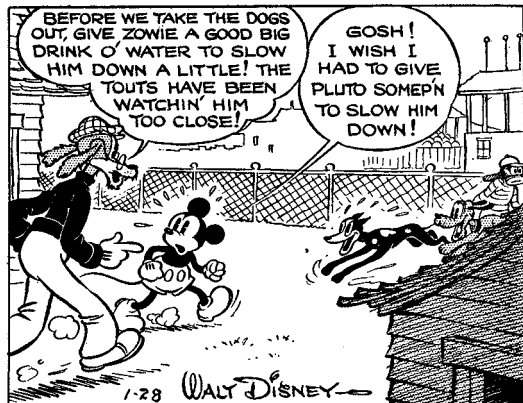
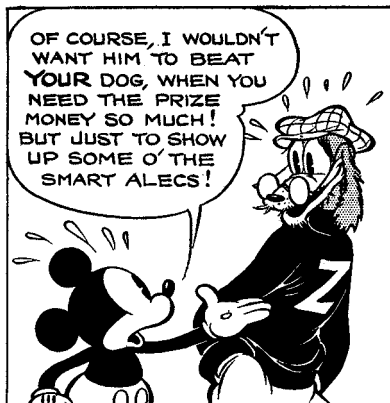
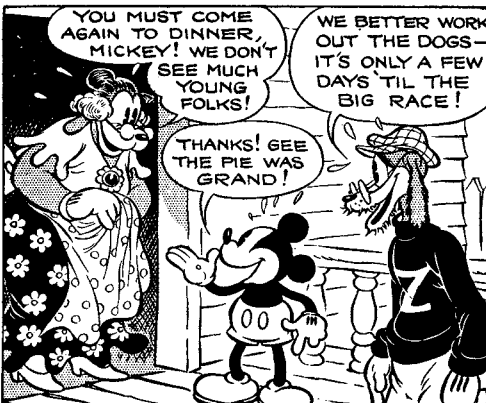
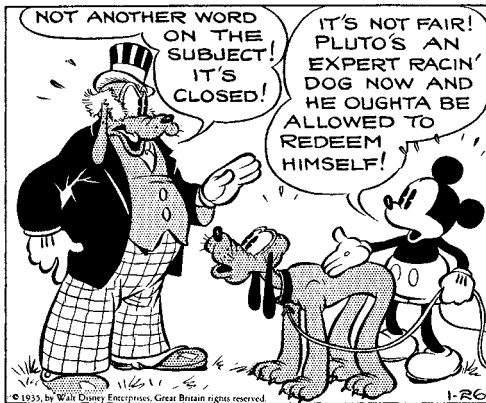


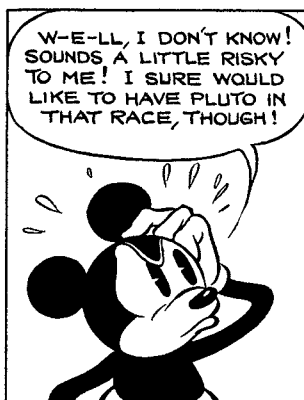
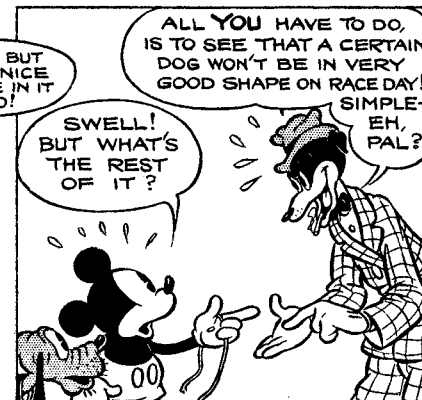
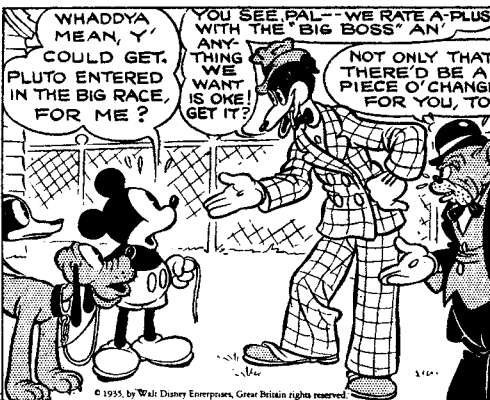
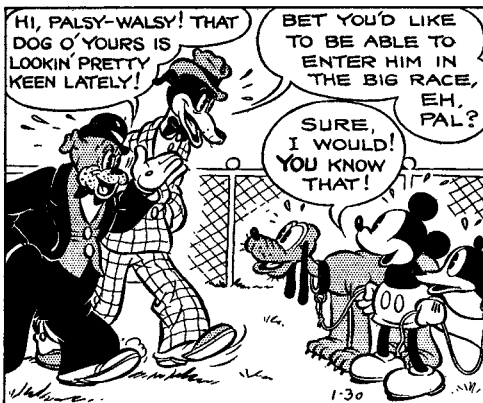
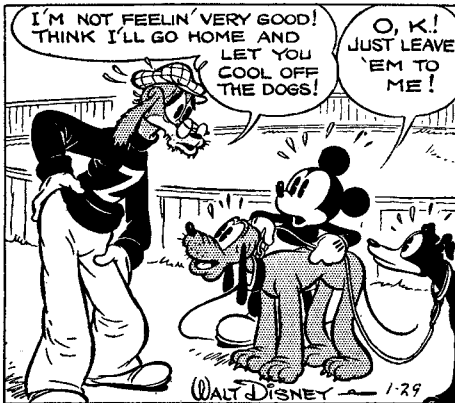
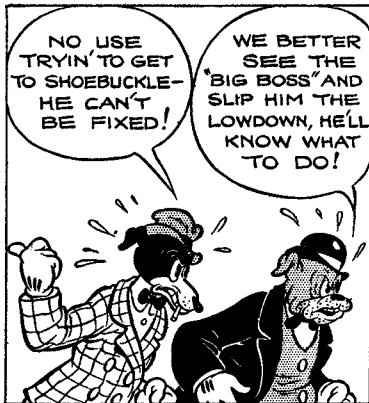


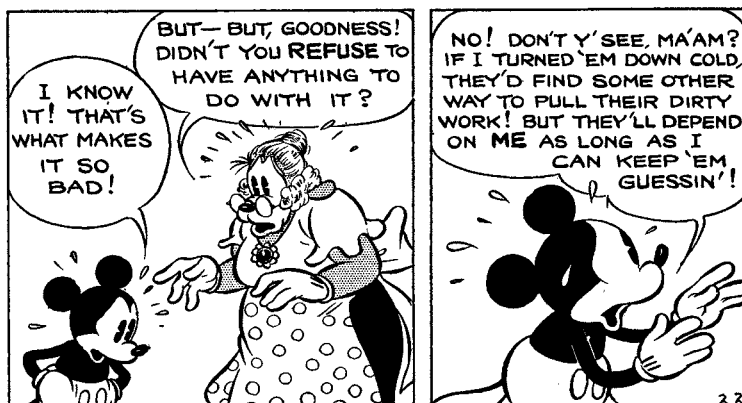
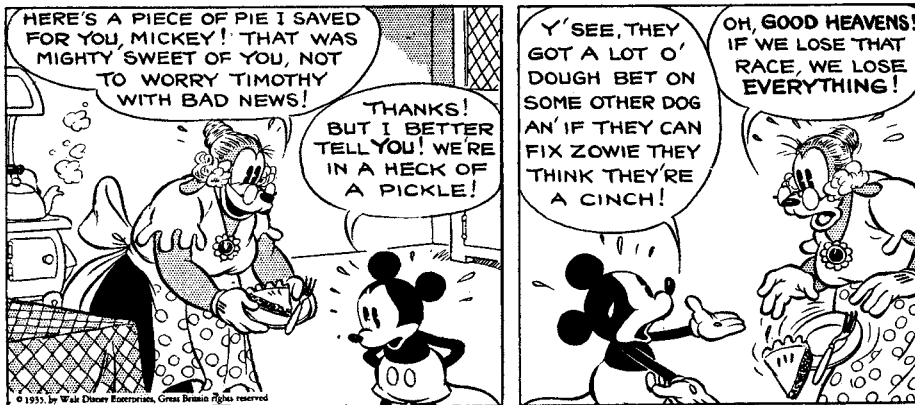
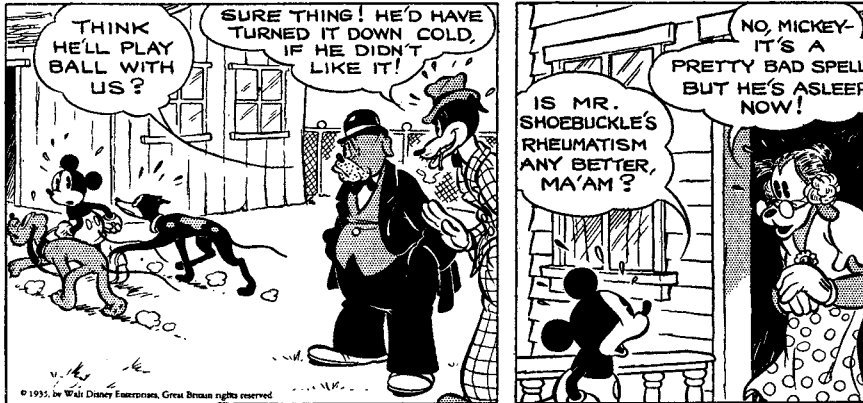


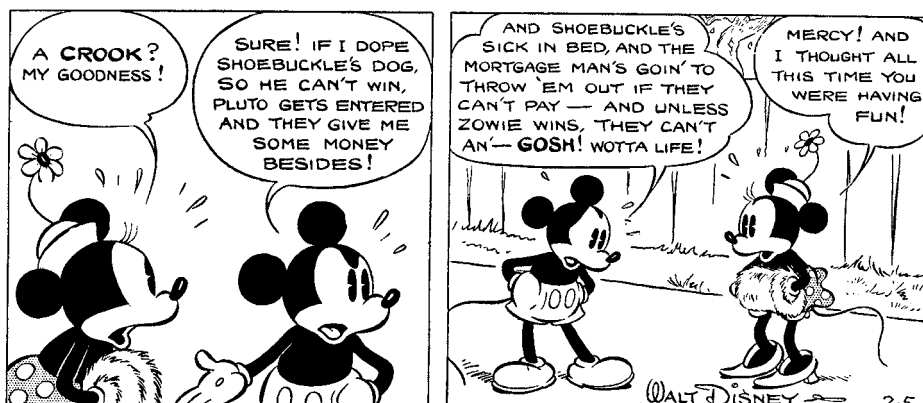
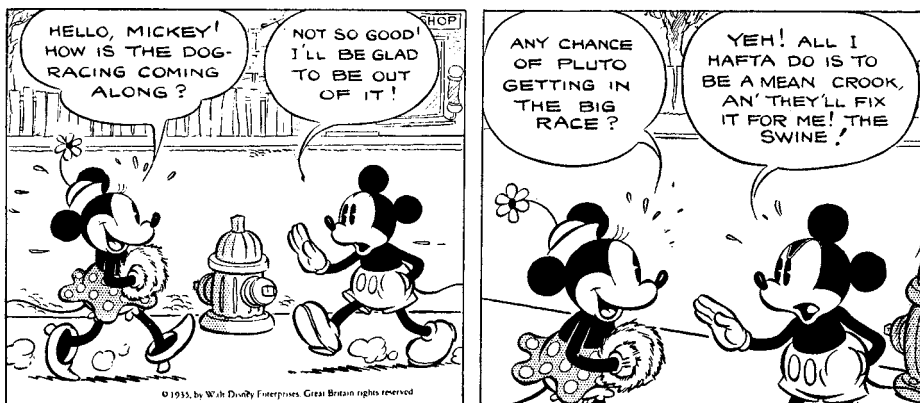
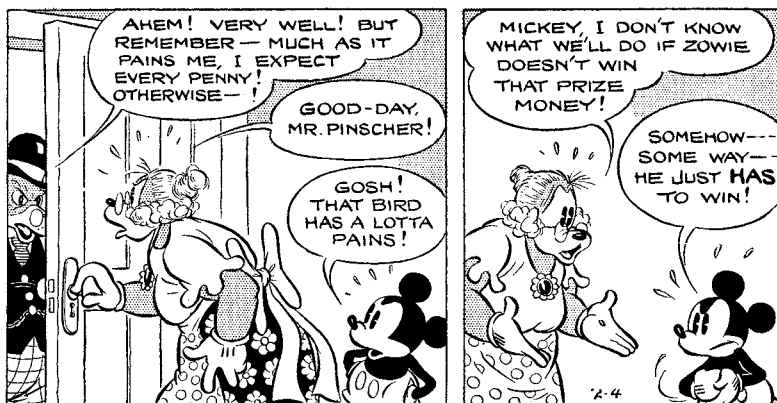


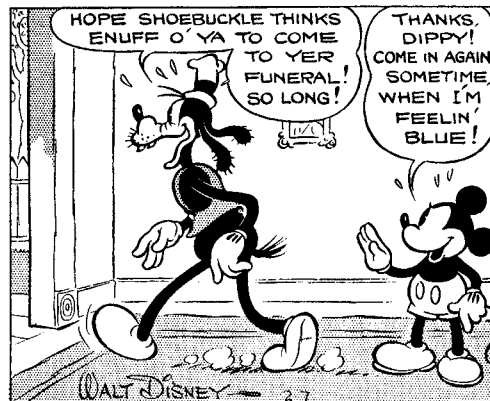
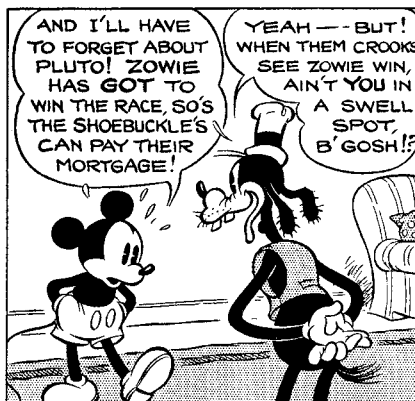
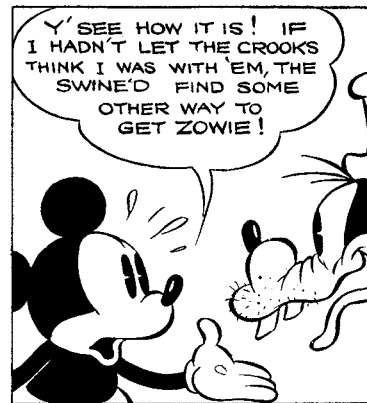
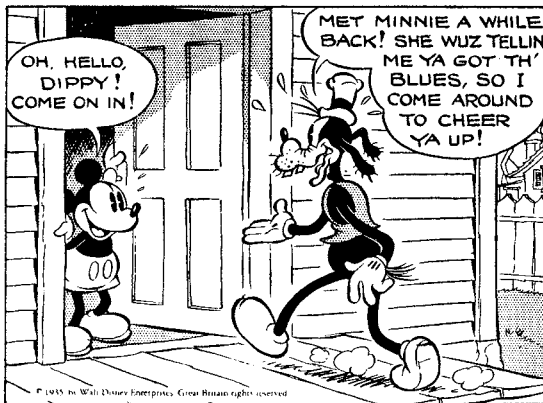
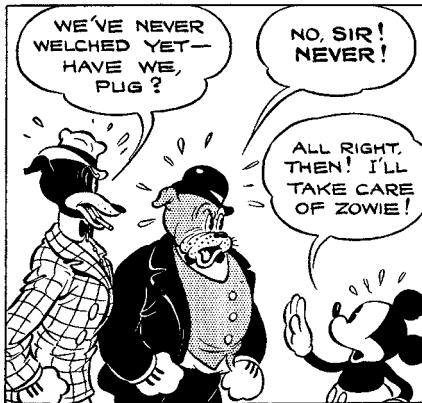
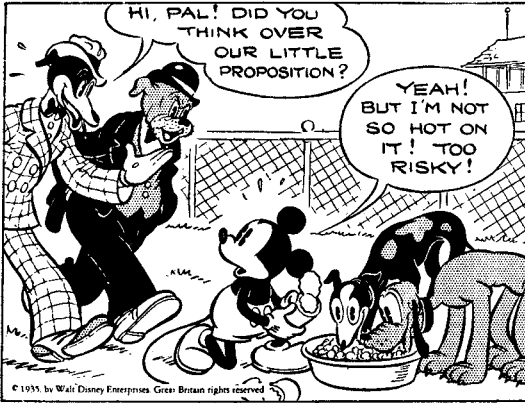


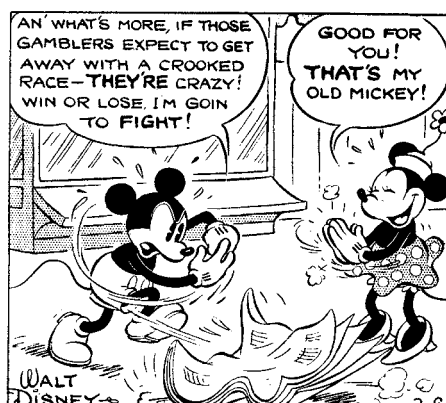
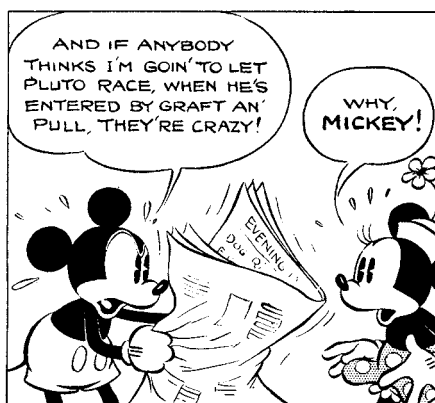
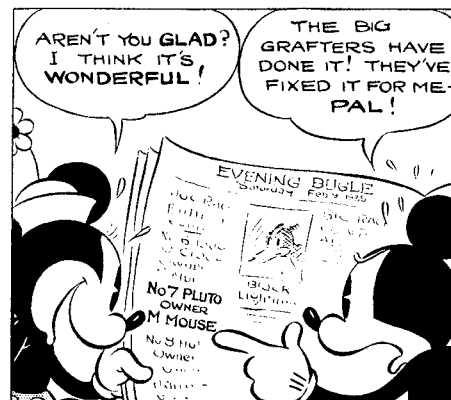
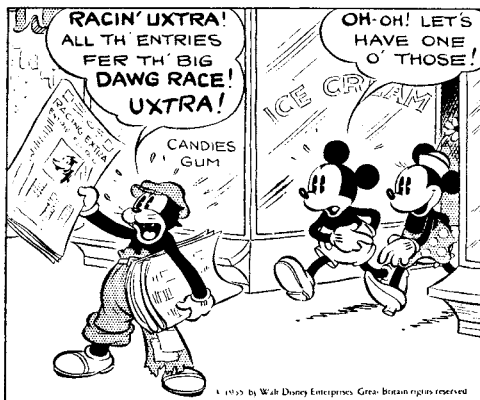
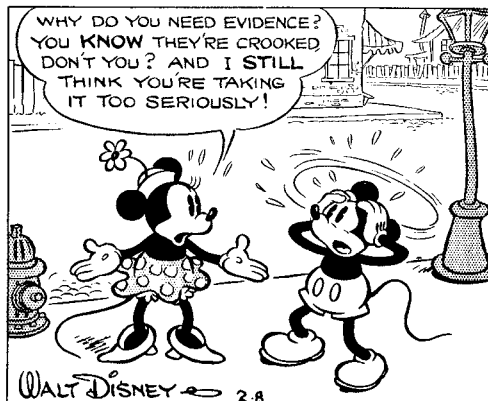
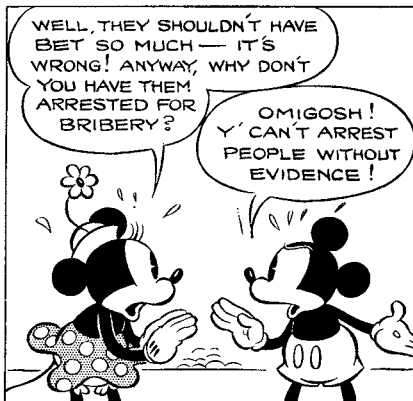
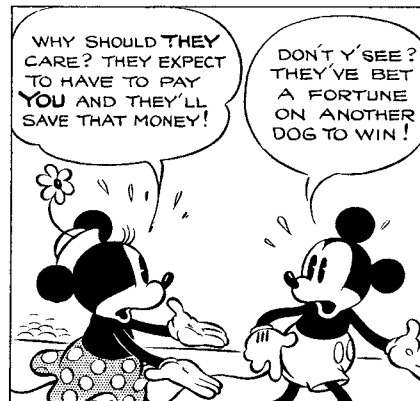
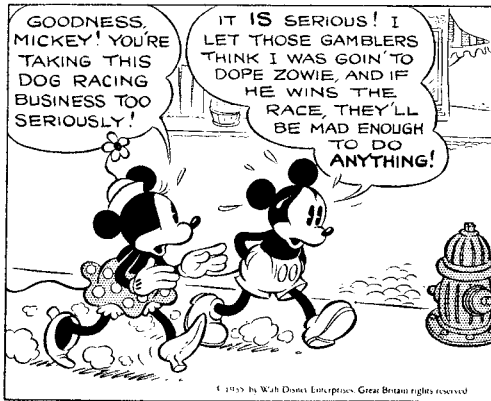


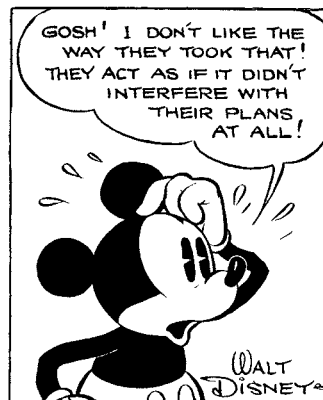
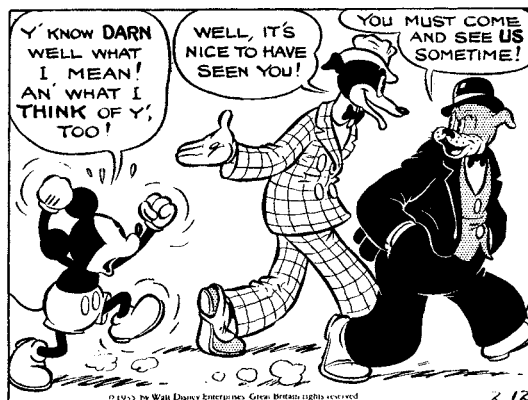
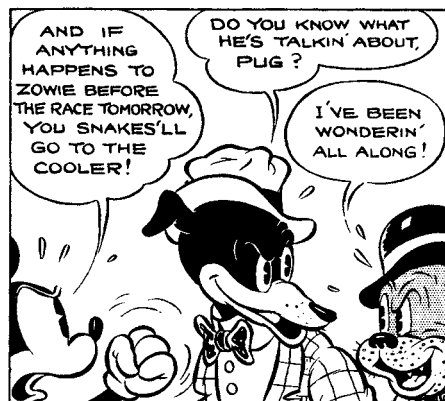
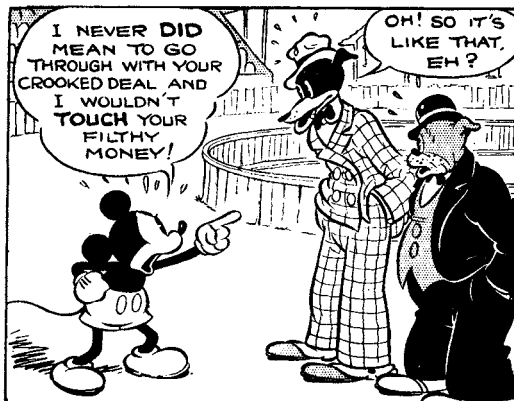
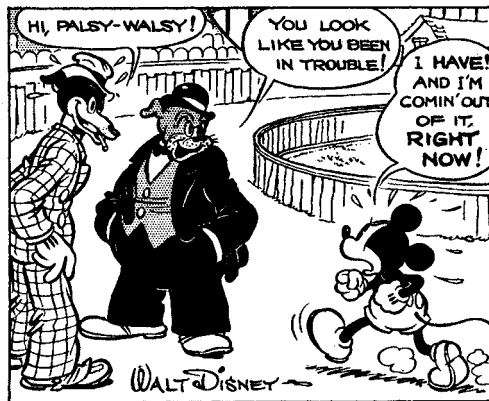
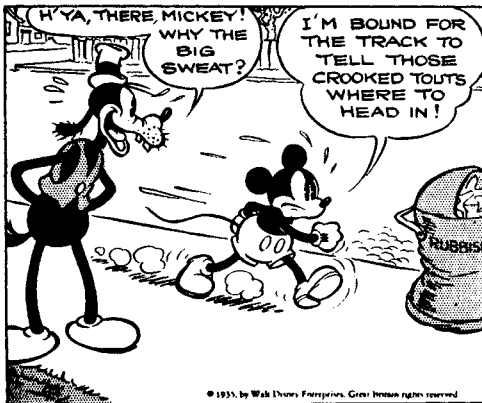


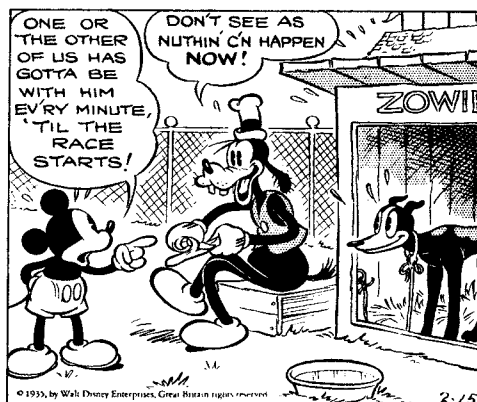
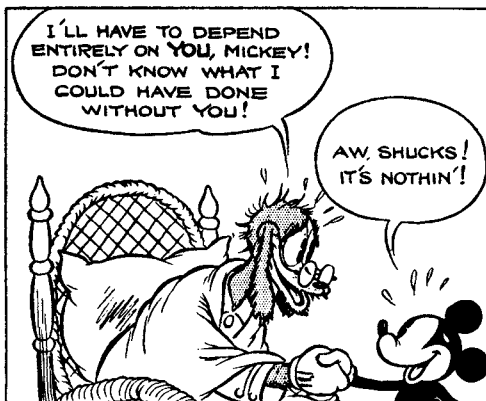
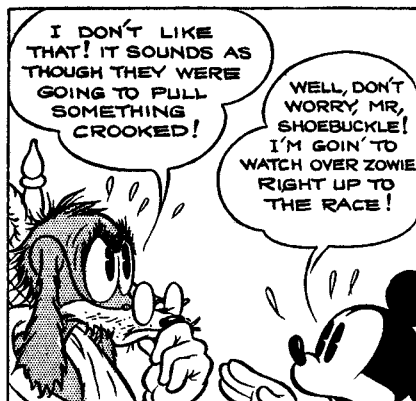
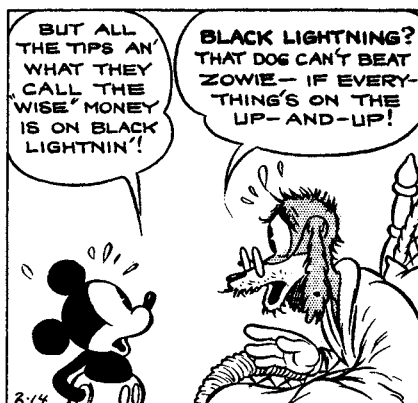
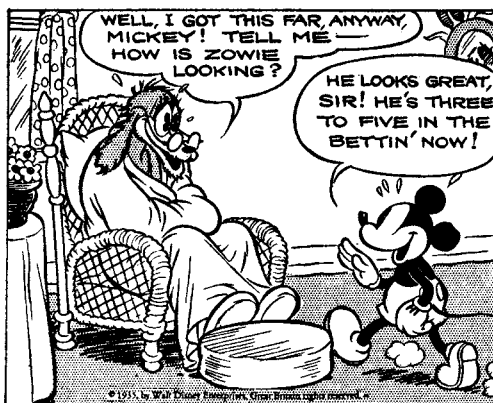
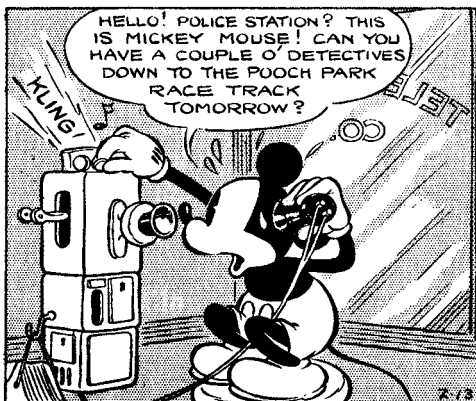


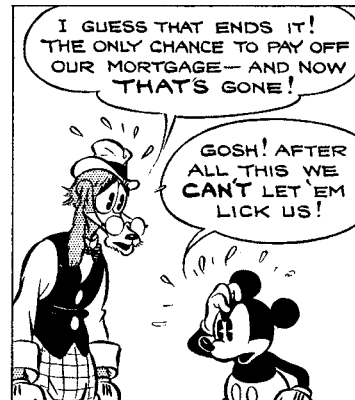
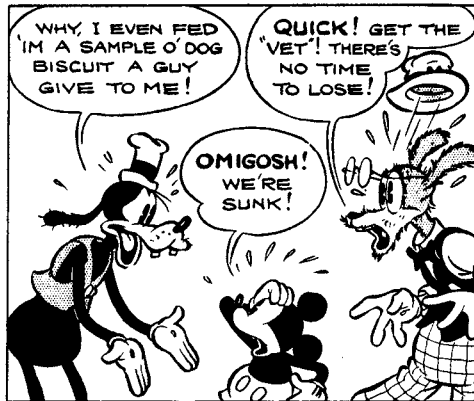
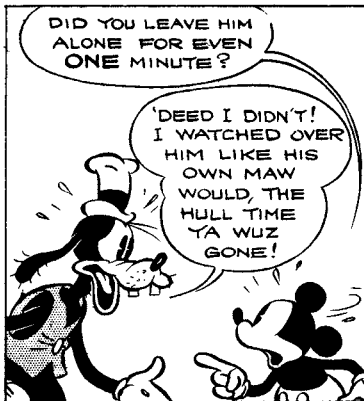
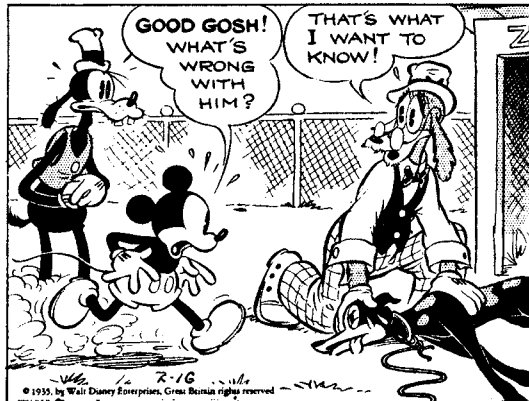
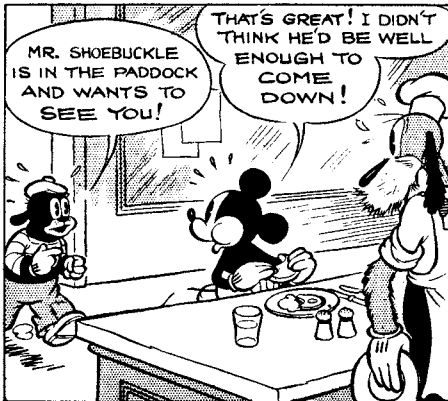
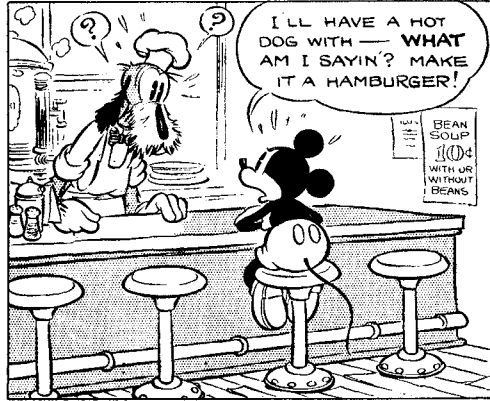
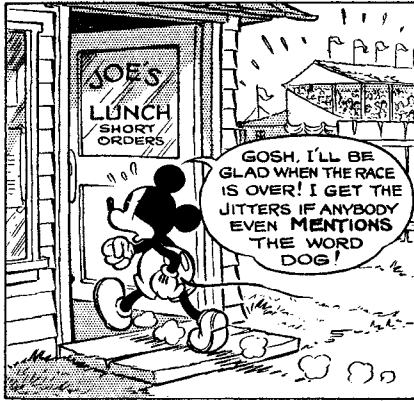


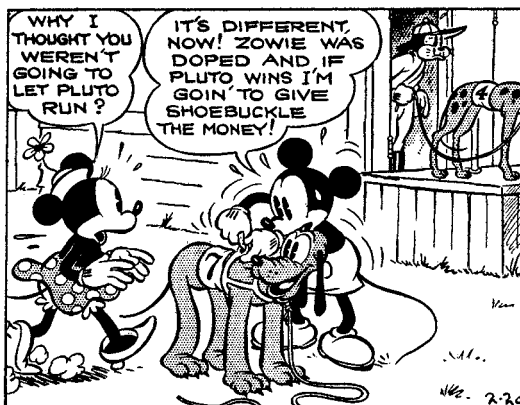
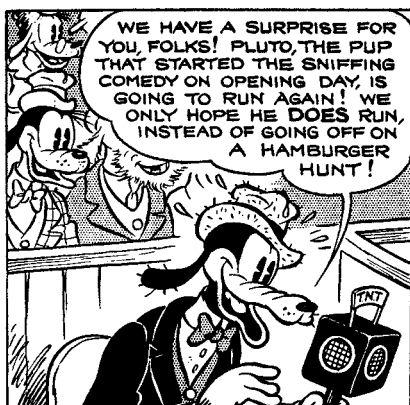
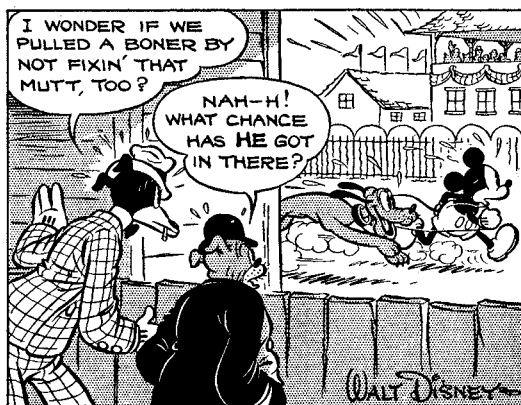
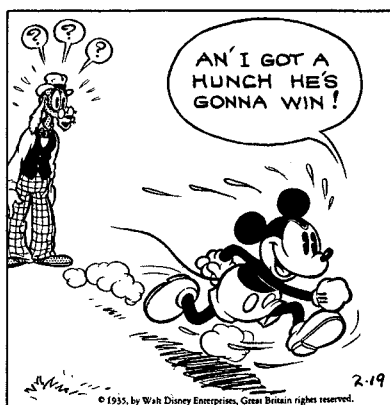
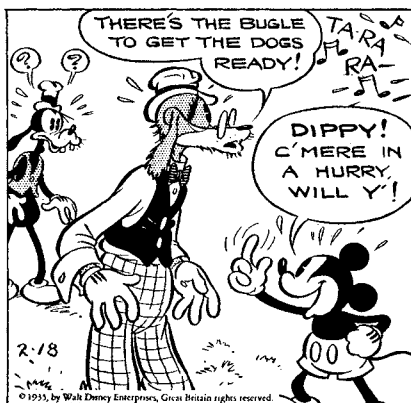
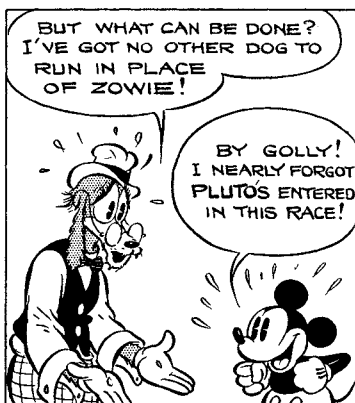


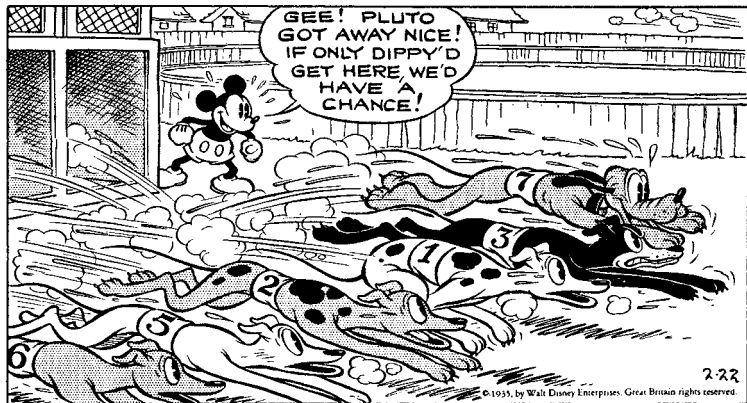
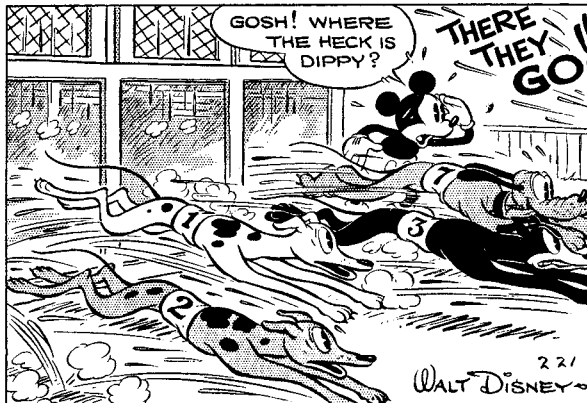
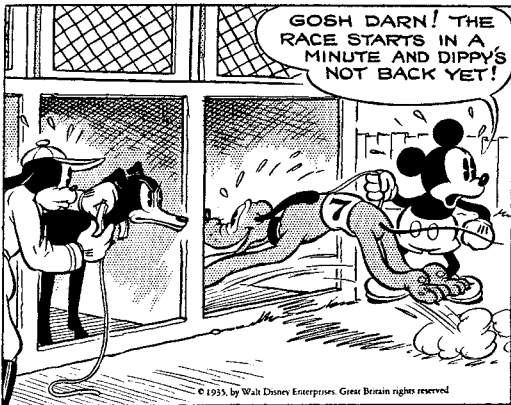


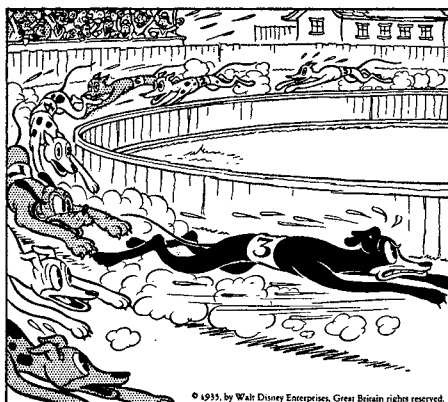
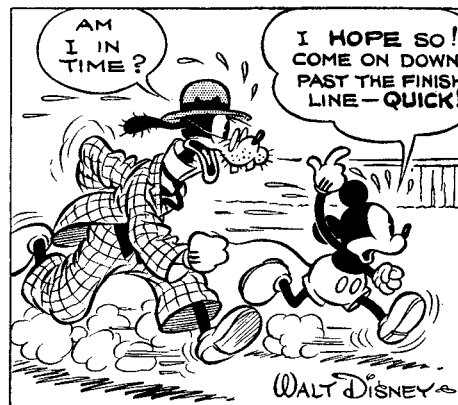
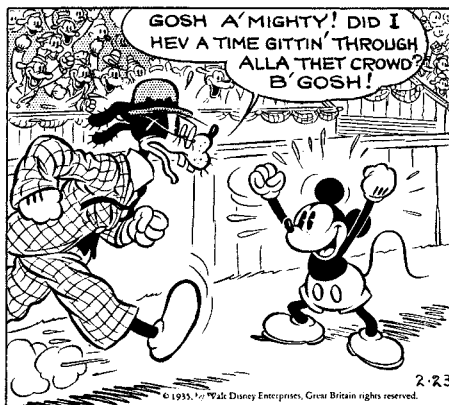
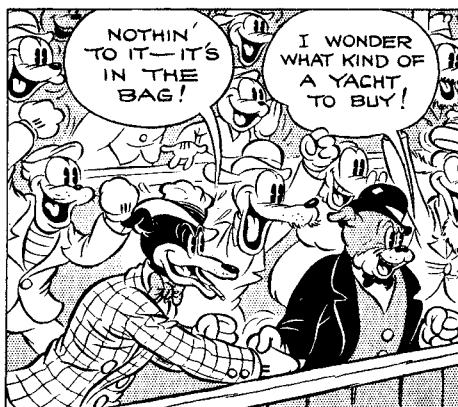
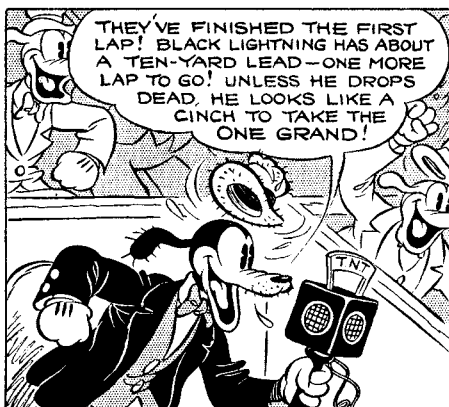
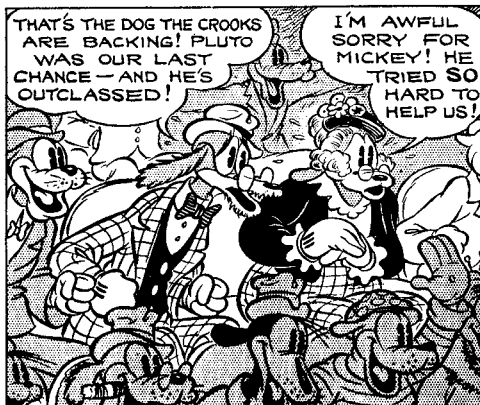


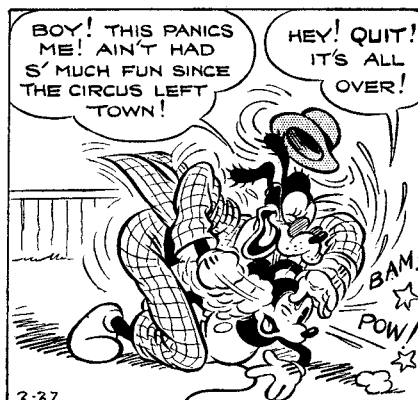
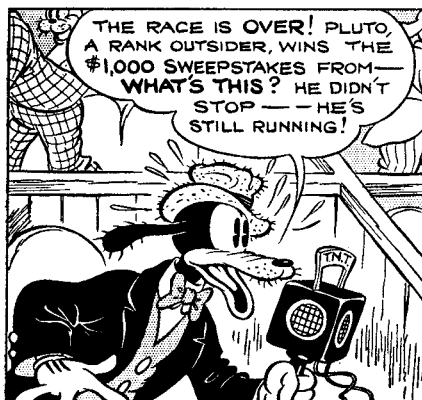
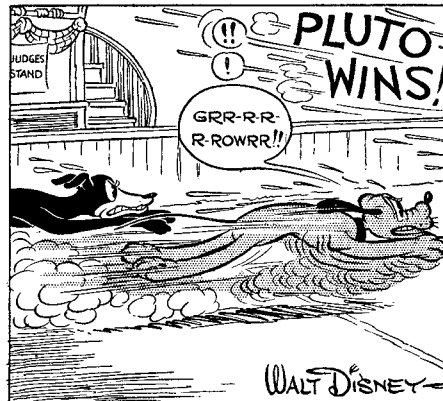
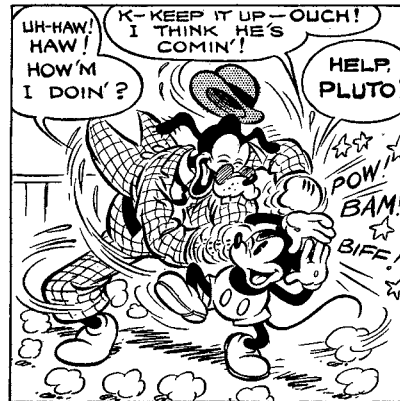
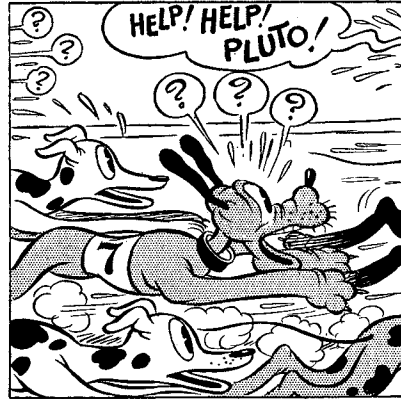
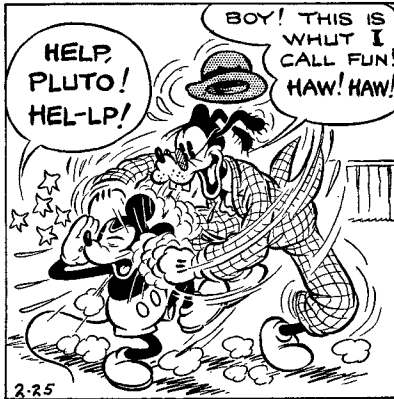


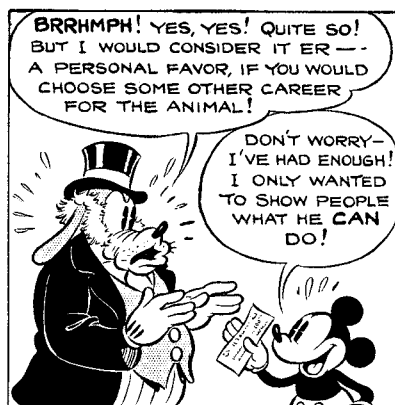
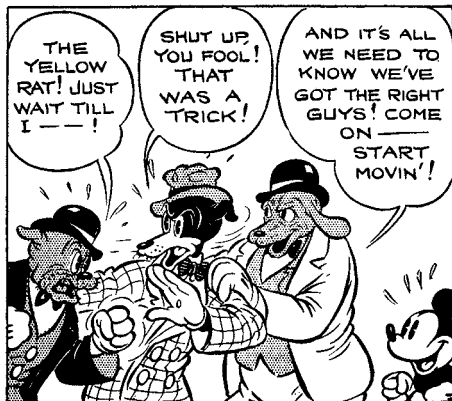
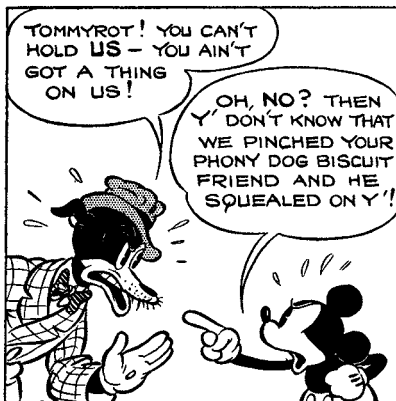
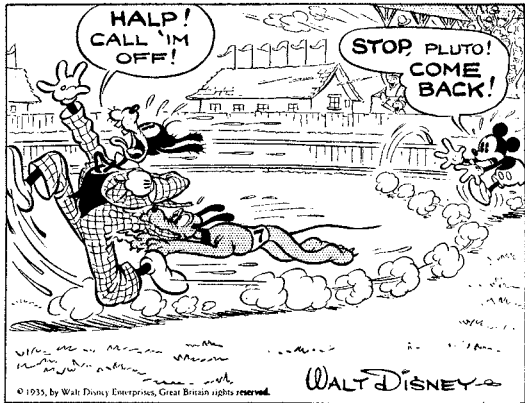
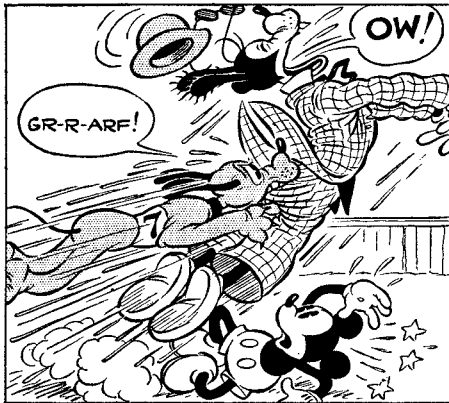


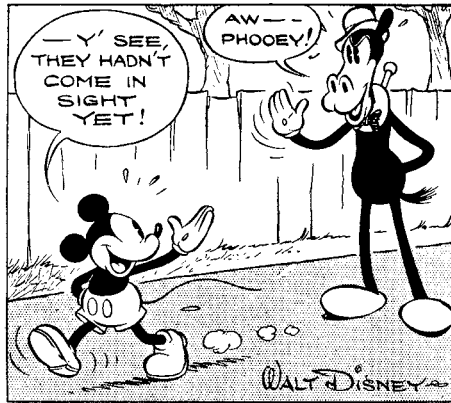
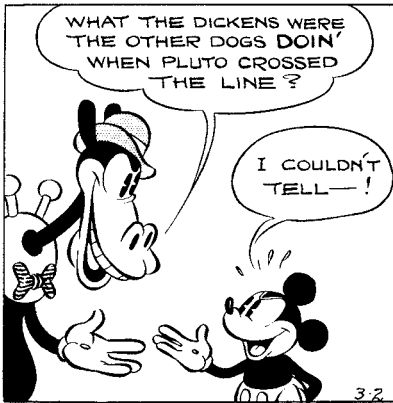
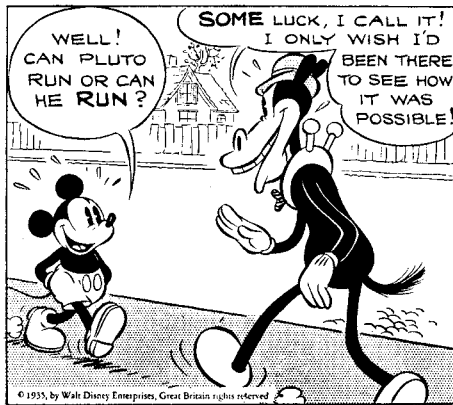
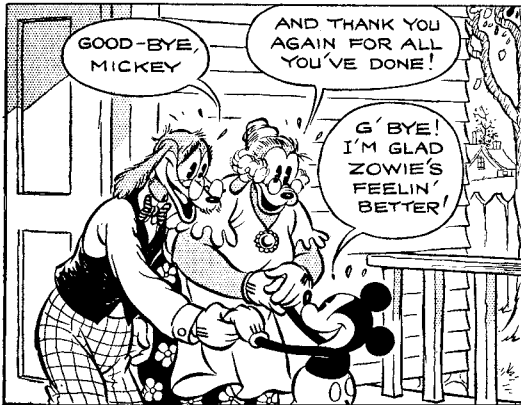












The End

FLOYD GOTTFREDSON, THE MICKEY STRIP AND ME

>> APPRECIATION BY FLOYD NORMAN

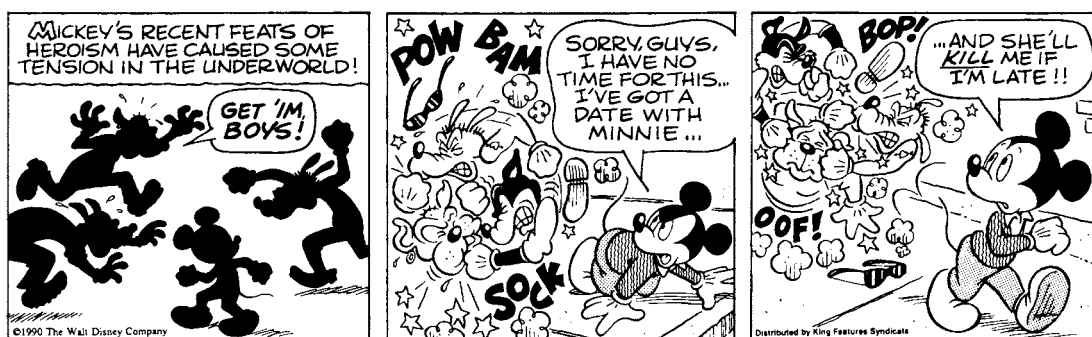
LIKE MOST KIDS, I first became aware of the famous Mouse while reading the monthly comic book *Walt Disney's Comics and Stories*. As a young person in the 1940s, I knew Floyd Gottfredson's work from its reprints in these comic books. But I didn't even know there was a Mickey Mouse comic *strip*, and I knew nothing about Floyd Gottfredson. All the published comics were credited to Walt. Of course, I saw the Mickey cartoons on the big screen in our local theater, and I remember how different the later screen Mickey was from the scrappy, adventurous little guy I read in the comics.

I still remember the love I had for Gottfredson's Mouse and how real he seemed to me. I had no idea how much a part of my life Mickey would become as I followed my career path. Initially, I dreamed of

working in comics, but that was soon followed by an interest in animation. Clearly, the Walt Disney Studio was my destiny.

Years passed, and eventually I found myself inside Walt's magic factory serving an animation apprenticeship. While visiting the scene-planning department one day, I happened across a piece of original Disney art. It was the Mickey Mouse title card that preceded every Disney Mickey cartoon. An image I had seen countless times up on the big screen when I was a child. Yet, here it was in front of me, and I could actually touch what I considered a magical piece of Disney history.

As my colleagues and I continued our tour of the Disney Studio, we made our way up a flight of stairs in an older building. A group of gentlemen sat at their



drawing tables working away. I'm embarrassed to say we had no idea who they were, but they quickly introduced themselves. The gentleman drawing Donald Duck was Al Taliaferro, and the artist drawing Mickey was Floyd Gottfredson. It appeared I had finally met the man who had given me so much delight as a kid and inspired me to become a Disney artist.

I still regret my meeting with Floyd Gottfredson was so brief that day. However, we were young kids and we didn't want to waste the time of these wonderful Disney artists. I saw Mr. Gottfredson a few times after that initial meeting, but sadly I never got to know him that well. The Disney veterans were a good deal older than myself and my colleagues, and we were reluctant to make a nuisance of ourselves. In time, I did get to know Floyd's son, an animation artist whose first name happens to be the same as my last. Norman Gottfredson soon became a friend, and I still find the "name thing" rather curious.

As an animation artist, I worked on many a Mickey animated segment for the *Disneyland* TV show, but I didn't join Disney's Comic Strip Department until the early 1980s, where I considered myself a cartoon utility man of sorts. I would, on occasion fill in for a writer who was ill or on vacation. Sometimes, that even meant writing the *Mickey Mouse* comic strip. Over time, I worked on it more and more.

The strip had evolved over the years. The editorial styling and even the art styling had changed. As Floyd Gottfredson grew older, Mickey seemed to have aged with him. I don't suppose there was any way around such a change. Floyd had been drawing Mickey Mouse since the 1930s. Clearly, their lives were intertwined. What else could one expect? Mickey was no longer the scrappy, cheeky little guy from his early years. No longer the explorer heading off into the jungles of Africa or the frozen wastes of the North Pole, Mickey had settled into a cozy suburban lifestyle, and morphed into a cartoon version of Ozzie Nelson.

King Features Syndicate insisted that Disney continue their gag-a-day newspaper format even after Floyd retired. Once I found myself the ongoing writer of the *Mickey Mouse* comic strip, I pleaded with Disney and the syndicate to allow me to bring back the real Mickey we knew and loved. I was so eager to write Mickey adventures for the daily strip, even though all insisted that doing daily gags would be the only way to keep the strip alive. I persisted, and eventually King allowed me to write ongoing Mickey continuities. They limited me to three-week storylines, but I sometimes fudged and pushed it to four. I had achieved my greatest joy: writing Mickey adventures much like the stories I read as a kid! I was



ABOVE: The opening scene of Floyd Norman's first Mickey daily strip serial paid homage to Gottfredson's first strip which you can see in *Walt Disney's Mickey Mouse: "Race to Death Valley"* published by Fantagraphics Books. Art by Alex Howell; image courtesy Thomas Jensen.

LEFT: An early 1940s title card—and a late 1950s rediscovery for young Floyd Norman.

RIGHT: Mickey, Goofy, and Horace face wicked Count Dupree in Norman's last Mickey daily strip story—one that was shelved before inks had been completed. Art by Rick Hoover, c. 1995.

fortunate to have editors who never restricted what I could write, as long as my stories stayed within the bounds of Disney propriety.

It may sound odd, but I never had a moment of difficulty writing Mickey Mouse. Thanks to Floyd Gottfredson's wonderful portrayals, I knew the characters so well that my stories almost seemed to write themselves. I simply needed to put Mickey and Goofy in a situation and listen to what they would say. It would seem my childhood passion for Floyd's comics enabled me to absorb the process by osmosis. Clearly, it was in my blood now, and this old storyteller wasn't about to complain.

Yet, in spite of the fun I was having, the *Mickey Mouse* comic strip was eventually cancelled, or rather new stories stopped being produced for it. The strip went all-reprint, and I had to stop producing my final storyline right in the middle. Both Disney and the syndicate agreed it was time to retire the famous mouse.

I look back on my days with Mickey Mouse as a delightful time. In many ways, Mickey has touched me and become more real than ever. I've had the opportunity to work with most of Mickey's creators, from Walt Disney to Ub Iwerks. I've known Mickey's voices, Jimmy MacDonald and Wayne Allwine. I've worked with the Disney animators who gave life to Mickey on the big screen, and I was given the opportunity to write the comic strip I so loved as a kid. I grew up on the stories of Floyd Gottfredson, Bill Walsh and so many other talented individuals.

Back in 1930, Walt Disney had his hands full, so he needed one of his talented staffers to write and draw the Mickey Mouse comic strip. Floyd Gottfredson stepped up and took on the temporary job. A job that lasted over forty years and gave us incredible adventures, memorable characters and a hero that would make Indiana Jones proud. Thank you, Mr. Gottfredson, for a job well done. ●

Floyd Norman started work with Disney as an animation artist on Sleeping Beauty (1959), then moved to the story department with The Jungle Book (1967)—making him Disney's first African-American story man, and enabling him to work with Walt on the last film that the "Old Maestro" personally supervised. After a storied career elsewhere, including work as writer/producer of Sesame Street animated segments, Norman rejoined Disney in the 1980s, working first for the Comic Strip Department and then as an animator on Disney and Pixar feature films. Floyd received a Disney Legends Award in 2007 for his animation contributions.





LEFT: Floyd Gottfredson, RIGHT: Carl Barks