

It's a Small World



One of the videos I transferred yesterday contained footage of a young girl's first visit to Disney World. It captured all the excitement, joy, scope and splendor that is The Magic Kingdom.

It's funny, but I do not recall ever going to Disney as a child. I moved to Orlando as an adult and have been to the park numerous times since, but I don't believe I ever went as a youngster. However, I was one of the first people to experience Disney's most iconic ride – It's A Small World.

In 1963, Walt Disney was asked to create a ride for Pepsi to be their sponsored pavilion for UNICEF in the 1964 New York World's Fair. Because the Pepsi board of directors could not decide on a design, actress Joan Crawford, then on the board, called upon her friend Walt to design it for them and coerced Pepsi to pre-approve his as-yet-to-be-seen design as time was

short. In fact, the entire project was conceived, engineered and constructed in a mere eleven months. The ride was at that time called: Children of the World. And I was there when I was merely 9 years old.

Some fun facts:

- The UNICEF pavillion was one of five that Disney had a hand in creating/designing for the fair. The other four were for: Kodak, General Electric, Ford, and the state of Illinois.
- The pavilion consisted of a winding boat ride through tunnels where 460 animatronic dolls representing the children of the world dressed in their cultural garments were on display.
- The irritatingly infectious song, "It's a Small World," was written by the Sherman Brothers, best known for their score of "Mary Poppins." It was a fall back suggestion when the original idea of having each country's dolls singing their national anthem resulted in an unusable "cacophony."
- It has been said that "It's a Small World" has been played more times than any other song in history. It is played around 1,200 times during a 16 hour operating day at a Disney park.

Michael Ondrasik and Home Video Studio specialize in the preservation of family memories. For more information, call 352-735-8550 or visit www.homevideostudio.com/mtd