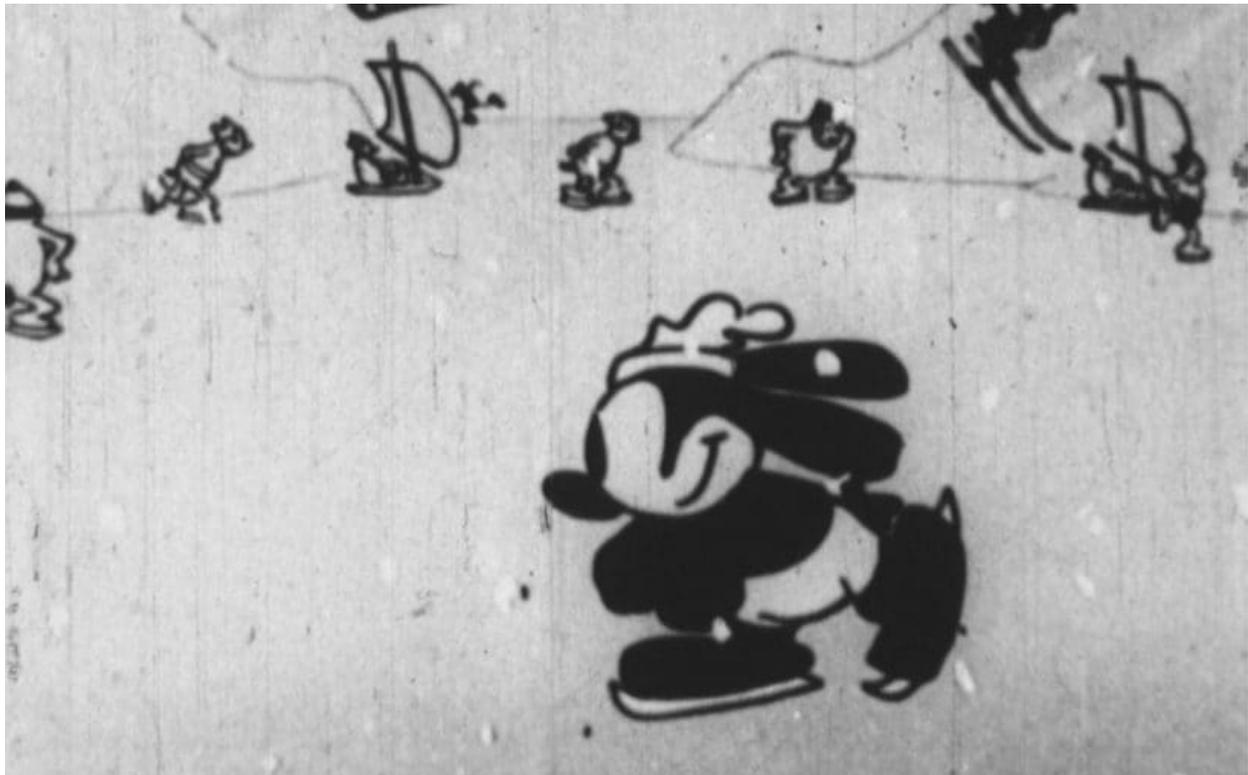


# The Telegraph

By Julian Ryall, in Tokyo  
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## Disney's 'lost' Oswald the Lucky Rabbit movie surfaces in Japan



Oswald the Lucky Rabbit appears in another 1928 animated film called Sleigh Bells Credit: Walt Disney Animation Studios

A short animated film that was created by Walt Disney in 1928 but feared lost has been discovered in Japan.

The two-minute, black-and-white film footage features Oswald the Lucky Rabbit, a character that Walt Disney created in 1927, a year before he came up with the character that was to make him a household name globally, Mickey Mouse.

Titled "Neck 'n' Neck" when the film was released in the US, a handful of copies reached Japan, where one was purchased by a high school student named Yasushi Watanabe from a toy wholesalers' market in the city of Osaka.

Mr Watanabe failed to realise the significance of his purchase, the Asahi Shimbun newspaper reported, until he read a book titled "Oswald the Lucky Rabbit: The Search for the Lost Disney

Cartoons”, published in 2017 by David Bossert, who had worked for many years on animated movies at the Walt Disney Studios in the US.

According to Mr Bossert, Walt Disney created 26 short films that starred Oswald the Lucky Rabbit, but only 19 have survived. Despite the film studio and collectors being on the lookout for the missing footage for the last 90 years, examples of the remaining seven have never before been located.

Mr Watanabe, now 84 years old, contacted the author and the Walt Disney Archives about his film, which the archives have since confirmed is “Neck ‘n’ Neck”.

In the movie, a dog policeman uses a motorcycle to pursue Oswald and his girlfriend, who are in a car. The chase takes the vehicles up a steep mountain road, with the vehicles stretching and contracting as they round steep bends, a frequent Walt Disney device used in many of his later works.

“I’ve been a Disney fan for many years and I’m happy that I have been able to play a role in this discovery”, he told the Asahi.

Becky Cline, director of the Walt Disney Archives, said, “We are absolutely delighted to learn that a copy of the lost film exists”, while Mr Bossert said the find is “very exciting” and he hopes to be able to screen the footage at an event in Los Angeles for a group of animation scholars.

One of Walt Disney’s earliest characters, the legendary movie maker lost the rights to Oswald the Lucky Rabbit to a rival company in 1928. The experience reportedly angered Mr Disney, but spurred him to create a new character who is now known the world over as Mickey Mouse.

November 18 marks the 90th anniversary of Mickey Mouse’s first appearance in a movie.

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2018/11/15/disneys-lost-oswald-lucky-rabbit-movie-surfaces-japan/>