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MINE TRAIN

OPENED: 1956 MAKEOVER: 1979

When Disneyland opened in 1955, a desert-themed area – called Nature’s Wonderland, to tie into a recurring segment on the old Disneyland TV show – featured mule and wagon rides.

A year later, the Rainbow Caverns Mine Train was added to the mix. The highlight of the ride was a cavern, where riders saw seven brilliantly lit water-falls. More than 270,000 gallons of water reportedly circulated to create the effect.



In 1960, dozens of animatronic figures were added to the ride and the attraction was renamed the Mine Train through Nature’s Wonderland.

In 1979, however, the scenic train ride was replaced with a thrill ride: Big Thunder Railroad, a fast-moving version that has become one of the park’s best-liked attractions.

The \$4 million renovation freshened the ride’s scenery, including the original mining village built in 1956, and adds spectacular faux-explosive effects in the cavern.

TREEHOUSE

OPENED: 1962 MAKEOVER: 1999

A memorable part of the 1960 Disney movie “Swiss Family Robinson” is the treehouse the stranded family creates with fixtures from the wrecked vessel.

In 1962, the Swiss Family Treehouse opened in the park’s Adventureland section. Clever design – and 300,000 fake leaves – hid the fact that the tree was actually made of steel and concrete.



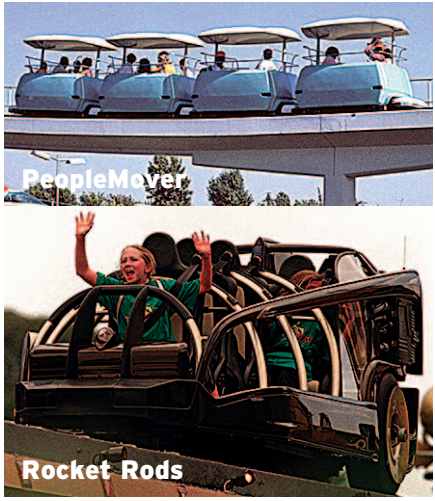
In 1999, Disney kicked the Robinsons out of the tree and replaced them with the star of “Tarzan,” which hit theaters the day after the treehouse reopened. Some artifacts were kept from the original attraction, including a snippet of the “Swisskapolka” theme song. The Swiss Family version still stands in Disney’s Orlando, Paris and Tokyo parks.

PEOPLEMOVER

OPENED: 1967 MAKEOVER: 1998

The WEDway PeopleMover, opening in 1967, consisted of an elevated track containing 500 electric motors placed nine feet apart. The motors turned rubber tires – the ride was sponsored by Goodyear – that pushed segmented trains at speeds that varied from 2 to 7 miles per hour.

It made for a relaxing tour of Tomorrowland and the submarine lagoon that separated that section from Fantasyland.



Disney closed the PeopleMover in 1995. Three years later, the park opened a new thrill ride called the Rocket Rods, which moved quite a bit faster down the same track.

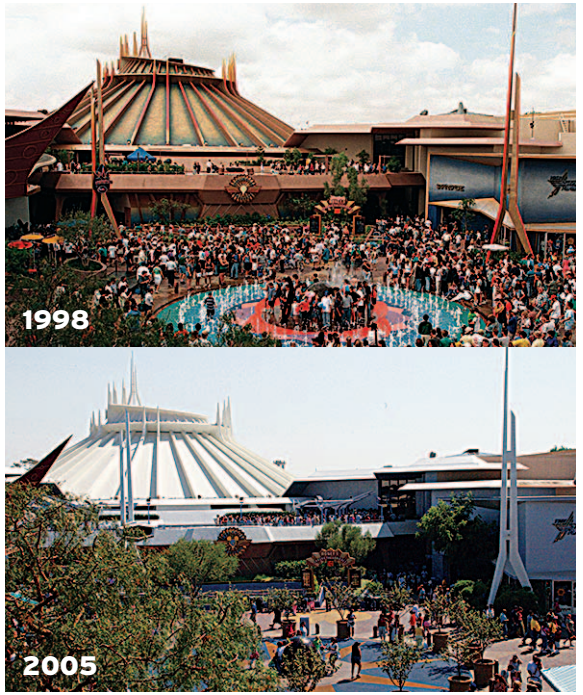
The attraction was plagued with long lines and frequent break-downs. After three years, Disney closed the ride for renovations and never opened it again. The unused track still loops around Tomorrowland. An original PeopleMover still operates at Walt Disney World.

TOMORROWLAND

OPENED: 1955 MAKEOVER: 1998 REMAKEOVER: 2003

When Disneyland opened in 1955, the fictional world of the future portrayed by Tomorrowland was set in 1986, the year Halley’s Comet would return. A major renovation in 1967 had kicked that can farther down the road, but keeping the place looking fresh and new proved tough. Walt Disney himself had admitted that “tomorrow is a heck of a thing to keep up with.”

In 1998, Tomorrowland reopened with a new look and feel. Gone was white-and-concrete. Everything was repainted in a retro, bronze-and-copper Jules Verne-era theme. The word “steampunk” was not yet in vogue.



The new look wasn’t popular with some Disney fans. The Wall Street Journal wrote: “The intention: earth-friendly. The effect: grunge.”

The new retro look lasted only five years. Space Mountain was returned to its original white color in 2003. Only a few touches of the bronze era remain in Tomorrowland.

DEFUNCT DISNEY

From time to time, the Mousemeisters close down attractions that seem to have outlived their popularity. Some of these are remembered fondly by Disney aficionados. Others, not so much. A few extinct rides and shows from Disney’s 59-year history:

Attraction	Opened	Closed	
Carousel of Progress	1967	1973	Originally built for 1964 World’s Fair. Current site of Innoventions.
Rocket to the Moon	1955	1975	Renovated in 1967; replaced in 1975 with Mission to Mars
Pirate Ship Restaurant	1955	1982	Site is now the Dumbo Flying Elephants
Adventure Thru Inner Space	1967	1986	Building is now the site of Star Tours
Mission to Mars	1975	1992	Venue is now the Pizza Port restaurant
Motor Boat Cruise	1957	1993	Closed when Mickey’s Toontown opened
Skyway	1956	1994	A Disney official called it “an accident waiting to happen”
Main Street Electrical Parade	1972	1996	Reappeared in 2001 in the California Adventure park
Mike Fink Keel Boats	1955	1997	Closed permanently after a boat capsized
Captain EO	1986	1997	3D movie with Michael Jackson. “Tribute” version opened in 2010
Submarine Voyage	1959	1998	Reopened in 2007 with a Finding Nemo theme
Country Bear Jamboree	1972	2001	Show revised in 1986, replaced in 2003 by Winnie-the-Pooh ride
Fort Wilderness	1956	2003	Closed in 2003; demolished in 2007

