

Walt and Skee-zix, Vol. 1: 1921-1922 By Frank King Not only does this volume reprint the first two years of the strip in which King's friendly and nostalgic imagination took shape but each book in the series features an eighty-page color introduction by Jeet Heer of Canada's National Post. Few cartoon strips have this kind of longevity and quality; Gasoline Alley has been with us since 1919 and is a gentle mirror held up to ordinary American life in the early twentieth century. It started as a mild satire on the post-WWI "craze" for cars.

Walt & Skee-zix is the first-ever collection of the classic twentieth-century newspaper strip Gasoline Alley and Book One is the beginning of a handsome multivolume series edited and designed by comics virtuoso Chris Ware. Chris Ware has often cited Gasoline Alley as one of his favorite comic strips ever and he has lovingly edited and designed Walt & Skee-zix: Book One the first-ever collection of the classic newspaper strip created by one of the pioneering giants of American comic strips but it wasn't long before it developed into a quirky family story attracting an audience of more than thirty million readers in four hundred-plus newspapers. As was implied earlier this has become slightly unfortunate as the strip is (obviously) no longer written and drawn by its creator Frank King and it has now passed through enough hands that today's Gasoline Alley carries little resemblance to the beauty and brilliance that King gave it until his retirement in the 1950's. Another unfortunate fact is that although numerous reprints of early Gasoline Alley have appeared throughout its 88 year history none had pursued a chronological exploration of the strip often choosing to focus instead on thematic collections. While the art and whimsical stories of Gasoline Alley shine through even in those mismatched bags they negated what makes Gasoline Alley such fascinating reading--the day to day growth and character development most of all its brilliant ability to focus on the power of time be it through the development of a romantic relationship the falling apart of a friendship or the growth of a young man. When the Canadian publishing company Drawn & Quarterly enlisted Chris Ware to edit their new chronological reprint collection of Walt & Skee-zix the decision was made not to begin in 1918 but to start with 1921 the time period when then-Chicago Tribune editor Joseph Patterson asked Frank King to insert an infant into the storyline. As Ware discovered King happily obliged using his own son as the model for Skee-zix having the infant boy show up as a foundling on the doorstep of Walt Wallet the strip's sole bachelor. Slowly methodically we read the most simple of stories--a mildly intelligent young man in love with both his hobbies and friends finds himself in a position of unwanted and difficult responsibility and begins the intensely emotional journey to becoming a father. Walt is a fascinating character and reading about his unwieldy efforts to grow into his new job as caregiver is a frequently amusing story with only the slightest nod to the somewhat sad circumstances he finds himself in. Near the waning months of the book's last collected year Walt begins to find himself attracted to a freshly arrived single woman and it is these pages that the story already brilliant rockets into the realm of innovation. As the weeks of story are flipped Walt is torn through every aspect of a courtship from the first date to the morning after and the reader is alongside him the entire time. By the book's close the two lovers still seem at odds with each other by circumstance alone kept apart by their agonizing inability to tell one another how they feel (which considering the time period it appeared is as accurate as King could've described). With the recent publication of Book 2 and the successful sales figures on Book 1 Drawn & Quarterly seem likely to continue the plan set out by Ware and publish the entire King run. Whether this happens or not (small presses are notorious for beginning projects like these only to fall apart in the early years) Book One is easily available and it's time for Gasoline Alley to leave the dark halls of neglected works and enter the canon of truly masterful American art that it's always belonged in. Comics I came to Gasoline Alley by way of that Anthology of Graphic Fiction Cartoons and True Stories collection that recently came out in which a beautiful beautiful Sunday page of the strip is included. King could certainly draw and craft a decent gag but where he especially excelled was in character development and his remarkable devotion to ensuring that the lives of his little people passed in real time served this purpose perfectly. We observe incurable bachelor and all around stand-up guy Walt Wallet as he deals with the initial shock of finding an abandoned infant on his doorstep followed by

the alternately hilarious and disgusting daily surprises that lie in wait for a new parent. Initially (and somewhat sensibly) applying his vast knowledge of auto mechanics to the realm of child rearing Walt soon becomes attached to the little guy to the point where neither he nor his neighbors can remember or fathom a time when he wasn't wheeling Skee-zix (whose name is never really explained at least not in this volume; he's just Skee-zix and even a reader poll suggesting alternate more appropriate name for the baby does nothing to change the situation and Walt after allowing Skee-zix to pick a name out of a hat full of mailed-in ideas from around the world eventually outright refuses to acknowledge the contest altogether congratulating the winner while tossing the whole thing aside) around in a stroller or picking up the spoons the baby repeatedly throws on the floor or gabbing and conferring with other neighborhood mothers as to the baby's progress. Walt's just a great guy and as much of the time it's just himself and a currently mute (or non-verbal anyway) infant occupying the panels of the strip he'll talk right to you confiding his fears and pet peeves and hopes. Oftentimes you'll see him toddling around in the back or foreground silently getting into something while Walt discourses on something that might not even have anything to do with Skee-zix or just sitting in the stroller distracted by an alley cat while the grownups talk women and cars. The baby's first attempts at speaking aren't treated as a main plot point they simply occur so that when Skee-zix calmly replied to a neighbor's playful question of Who's little boy are you today? with Unca Walt! with his back turned to the reader and en route to picking up a toy car I actually gasped a little. I'd heard about Gasoline Alley but never saw the strip until around 1978; Dick Moores was doing it then in a wildly different (but still wonderful) style in that early era of truncated comic strip size. Walt a confirmed bachelor (his catchphrase was I'll say that I know when I'm well off! and usually expressed whenever one of his married friends had to do something the wife wanted or had to check with the wife about something. And volume 2 is even better! Comics The genius of this strip is its everyday rambling discursive quality which begins to emerge in 1922: it's moving to see King evolving as he realizes he doesn't always need a gag to make comic strip life fascinating. The editing on this series is first rate and the introduction and accompanying illustrations are an invaluable intimate record of a singular talent: sheer pleasure! Comics If you ever wanted to read a cartoon full of archaic automobile jokes a running gag where the lead is glad he's single child raising a skinflint doctor and what passed for dating in 1920 then this is for you! That said apart from the unfortunate way King draws black people this is a quaint and charming old comic strip. After creating a string of minor hits he made his lasting mark in 1919 by creating Gasoline Alley which became one of the most widely syndicated and read strips in North America until King's death in 1969. After creating a string of minor hits he made his lasting mark in 1919 by creating Gasoline Alley which became one of the most widely syndicated and read strips in North America until King's death in 1969, Each introduction will also feature never-before-seen archival photos and ephemera from the personal collection of King's granddaughter: Walt & Skee-zix is not just a collection of a classic comic strip—it is the story of a great American cartoonist. Gasoline Alley an affectionate portrait of modern living is remembered for being the first strip to set itself in contemporary American history, The characters of Gasoline Alley grow up go to war and have grandchildren, 1: 1921-1922 Misschien wel de mooiste leukste en ontroerendste comic die ik ooit las: Eerste deel - 1920 en 1921 gebundeld - van een groot en groots project van topuitgeverij Drawn and Quarterly, Gekocht in de ramsj van de winkel STRIP in Gent - de eenvoud. Volgende delen zien liggen wachten in de schatkamer van Senor Hernandez: It starts out as just a basic gag-a-day strip in 1921 but at some point in 1922 it starts to shift into something else. Its structure is still the usual newspaper strip but the rhythms change, It stops being nothing but car puns and is more of a slice of life thing. I'm not sure exactly what it is but it's kind of neat to have it sneak up on you: I did find the first half a bit of a struggle at times. A lot of the jokes require working knowledge of what the automotive hobbyist dealt with in 1921 along with how the United States society worked in that decade: It requires effort to understand 100 years after the fact and that'll make a lot of people bounce off this, I watch a lot of films from the 1920s so I thought I might be prepared but I wasn't, The day to day things are way different from what you get from a film. It definitely becomes an artifact of the era but characters become more real as you spend time

with them. I could imagine spending day after day watching Skeeze grow up and age throughout the years be something you get attached to: By the end I was invested and I'm going to have to get the rest of the volumes: The elephant in the room is the character of Rachel though Skeeze's nanny: She is an African-American woman and she is drawn in the minstrel style of the day, An extreme racist stereotype and its very uncomfortable to see, On the other hand Walt and the rest of the characters treat her like anyone else and she has the respect of the cast, On yet another hand King the author seems to write her as a kind of idiot savant character complete with a dialect that will make you shudder: I don't know how she was meant to be seen at time of her writing though, Was she a big deal for a newspaper strip? I'll leave that for someone else to work out: Still it's something to see a minstrel character in a strip that makes you realize that the style is the inspiration for Mickey Mouse. This clearly won't be for everyone but if you're interested in comic strip history or just an artifact of the decade it's from you'll find it interesting. Comics The beginning of a collection of books is too good to want to read the other parts Comics Until just last year Gasoline Alley was known only to a few: Even though the comic is unfortunately still carried in some daily newspapers few people outside of the cartoon world were aware of the strips majestic history. Gasoline Alley has been continuously published since 1918 and it's succeeded in being one of the only newspaper strips that's been published in real time, The day the strip appears in papers is the day the events contained in its four boxes occur and the next day and so on, Skeeze is now an octogenarian and is still one of the main features of the strips current incarnation, The first of the Drawn & Quarterly series titled Walt & Skeeze carries all the strips from those first two years of his introduction: It's brilliant work containing what is some of the most detailed art ever seen on a comic page re-printed in it's original size: It's somewhat dated especially in the case of the African-American nanny character an ugly artifact of the racial attitudes of that time period. Taken at random the book can seem incredibly slow even somewhat boring--but when read in order the strip is almost unbearably wonderful stuff. Skeeze grows only the slightest in these few years--he doesn't become a more active presence until his later years he is after all only an infant--but that's perfectly fine. Unlike any art form available at that time or now a day-to-day comic strip became the most honest place on earth to tell the story of a man falling in love. Unlike the movies and books that now control the telling of those stories Walt is never able to disappear from us--his every feeling his every emotion falls across each page: This fat cumbersome rectangle collects two of the strip's earliest years (omitting the pre-Skeeze debut year) focusing on the black and white daily strips. Not every strip leads to a punchline and the jokes that are there with a few notable exceptions will most likely elicit warm smiles at best: He wants to do the right thing and you have no doubt that he will, Skeeze for his part is no garish goofy Rugrats type of cartoon character but an honest-to-goodness baby completely lacking in self-awareness: As Skeeze grows over the course of the strip I found myself sharing Walt's pride and delighted surprise with each new development, Subtlety isn't something one often encounters on the funny pages and King's everyday approach to his material feels well ahead of its time, I really didn't want this book to end but reading slower was not an option, A nice spring day a good home-cooked dinner a shirt that fits perfectly & these cartoons. Those funnybook-drawin' fellers have done a good deed giving Frank King's work some long overdue credit: Kudos to Joe Matt for sharing and to Chris Ware for getting the job done: Comics I started reading these a little out of order; I found volume 2 first and devoured it, I found Walt & Skeeze: 1923-24 at a beloved and missed Barnes & Noble a few years ago, I was curious about the strip anyway and reading more about it the story of a man adopting a baby really appealed to me: (I have a small nephew I'm very close to so it tugged at my heart strings,) Needless to say I loved the book and pounced on volumes 1 and 3 when I found them in the next few months, Which brings us to this volume wherein Skeeze was first laid at Walt's doorstep and changed the direction of the strip probably cementing its place in comic strip history. Gasoline Alley was initially as mentioned in the introduction a gag strip about a community with a love for that new fad the automobile: (Whatever happened to cars anyway? Do people still drive them? ;)) With Skeeze the characterization shifted; the automobile focus and gags remained. Cross-country and leisurely New England drives still

became backdrops to the stories or became stories in themselves. There were a few concerns about a man being capable of taking care of an infant then toddler but Walt's affection for the little boy rolled right over those concerns, His batch status seems very threatend when the mysterious and attractive MRS. Blossom moved into the apartment at the end of the Alley, Everyone is eager to learn anything of her background (is there a Mr. Blossom? Where is he?) and the married men fall over themselves practically in coming to her assistance at every little need with her car, She takes a keen interest in both Walt and Skeezix which leads into the next volume. The only drawback to the book is the reduction of the strips' size makes it difficult to appreciate some of the sketchy details of the art, The bookboasts nice dimensions but newspaper strips were printed so much larger back then: While these strips are so much larger than strips today they're still smaller than at their original publication: There are frequent background visual gags that almost turn those strip into two strips and sometimes they're a little harder to see, Comics One of the pioneering giants of American comic strips Frank King was born in Cashton Wisconsin in 1883. He joined the staff of the Chicago Tribune in 1909 a newspaper which was known for aggressively developing comics to build circulation, Almost from the start of his career Kings cartoons were frequently featured on the front page of the Tribune, One of the pioneering giants of American comic strips Frank King was born in Cashton Wisconsin in 1883. He joined the staff of the Chicago Tribune in 1909 a newspaper which was known for aggressively developing comics to build circulation: Almost from the start of his career King's cartoons were frequently featured on the front page of the Tribune[1]

Frank King. The strip always reflects the kind sweet pace of life. Walt and Skeezix Vol. Was ik alvast maar jarig. Comics 3.5 Comics An interesting one. The tone is different. I was getting there just reading this over the week. I image it finds its voice even more in 1923. They even move the same way. It's a challenge but I found it worth my time. And it has been this way since 1918. I can't remember liking a cartoon character more. I can't wait to plow through the rest of the series. It was a good strip even then. But this is wonderful material highly recommended. Comics One of the best comics of all time. Magical. He spent most of his life in Chicago and Florida. He spent most of his life in Chicago and Florida. {site_link}

