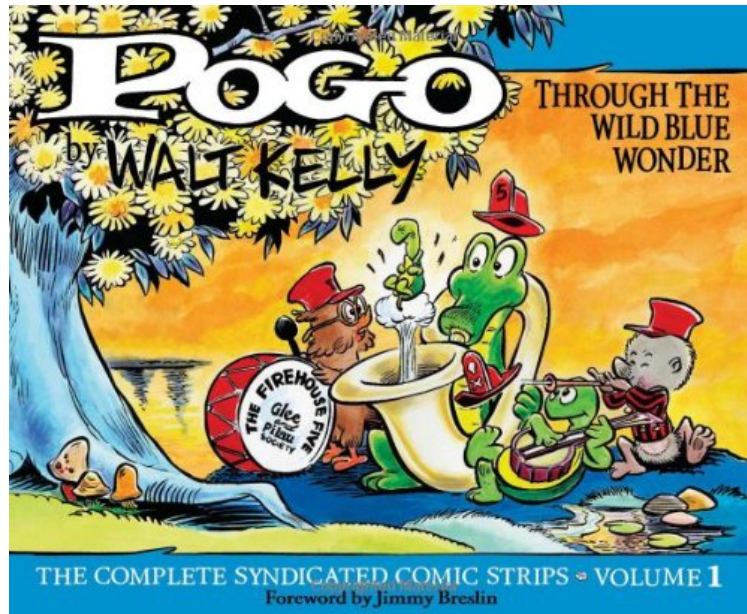


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Pogo: The Complete Daily Sunday Comic Strips, Vol. 1: Through the Wild Blue Wonder (v. 1)

Walt Kelly

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Walt Kelly : Pogo: The Complete Daily Sunday Comic Strips, Vol. 1: Through the Wild Blue Wonder (v. 1)
before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Pogo: The Complete Daily Sunday Comic Strips, Vol. 1: Through the Wild Blue Wonder (v. 1):

56 of 56 people found the following review helpful. It's about time ...By Jay1027The first words in the Editor's Notes of Fantagraphics new Pogo compilation Through the Wild Blue Wonder are the same words uttered under the breath of Pogo fans for almost ten years: "It's about time." The first of what is intended to be a twelve part series has finally arrived. Kim Thompson and Walt Kelly's daughter Carolyn Kelly have taken the time to give Pogofiles the quality product that that the work deserves. For the first time both the daily and Sunday strips have found a home together. The first thing a reader will notice after the beautiful dust cover (drawn and colored by Carolyn Kelly) is that the binding of this book is superior to similar collections, most notably the catastrophe that was done to Calvin and Hobbs. This is a book that should weather more than an occasional journey back into the Okefenokee Swamp. Opening the book to the first few pages and the reader finds original drawings that are sketched first with blue pencil and then inked. Walt Kelly used the blue pencil for the early sketching of his strips because the color did not show when the strip was reproduced. The table of contents lovingly breaks the content down into weeks and explains the action in a way that specific strips can be quickly found. I had to smile when I saw the first week's description began with: "Pogo and Churchy go fishing." There was never a predicament throughout the run of the strip that could not be solved with a return to the Suwanee River, the only river that runs through the actual Okefenokee, for either a casual float or a communal fish fry. What is surprising here is the lack of political satire. The first year of Pogo in syndication was for the most part politically noncommittal. Kelly first dabbles into political satire in March 1950, almost a year into the

syndicated run. Even this, as R. C. Harvey points out in a section named "Swamp Talk," was more puns and vaudeville than hard-hitting political satire. Kelly, like other cartoon artists at the time, avoided any topic that might be deemed controversial. Editors who disagreed could pull a strip they did not agree with resulting in the artist losing money. The strip would not become overtly political until Kelly retained the copyright on his strips that he had primarily loaned to Post Hall syndicate. This will occur in the second volume in 1952. The strips are separated into three categories. The daily and Sunday syndicated strips come first and are appropriately divided into different chapters. Kelly wrote the two for different audiences. Kelly believed that adults were the primary audience for the daily strips. This is where you will later find most of the political references. The Sunday strips were strictly for the kids. The only complaint that I might have concerning this volume is that the colors in this section may be too sharp. The strips speak for themselves. Doonesbury artist and writer Garry Trudeau, certainly no stranger to cultural and political comic strips, said Walt Kelly was a triple threat: Pogo was beautifully drawn, exquisitely written and enormously popular-- a true cartoonists' cartoonist. Pogo began as a comic book character. Kelly donated Pogo in strip form to the newspaper where he was working as an art director. The third strip section is comprised of the entire run of that occurred in the New York Star. The only remotely political strips that occurred during the original Star run was an announcement of a Truman victory in 1948, and then a couple weeks later a reference of people having to eat crow. Since the Star was the only major newspaper in New York to support the Truman candidacy, this strip may have been less political satire than a poke at the other newspapers. Nevertheless, these three strips were the only strips in the entire Star run that specifically dealt with national politics. The campaign for sheriff may have been a parallel campaign to the 1948 presidential campaign, but it mostly wordplay and slapstick humor. No epic Pogo journey could ever be complete without the help of Walt Kelly's friends and fans. In this first volume, American journalist and author Jimmy Breslin writes the Forward. Mr. Breslin was a long time friend of Kelly's since the time their favorite bar, affectionately referred to as Bleek's after the longtime proprietor, was located in the back of the New York Herald Tribune building. Many a night was spent drinking until the building shook when the morning edition hit the presses. Long time biographer and fan Steve Thompson, the hero of anyone who ever studied Pogo for academic reasons, wrote the introduction. He wrote, with the help of Kelly's third wife Selby Daley, what at this point may be the longest biographical study of Kelly, Pogo Files for Pogophiles. Mr. Thompson was the editor of the now elusive Fort Mudge Most, the Kelly fan magazine devoted to digging up ancient Kelly treasures. I recently tried to get copies through interlibrary loan, but I was told that the few libraries that had the issues would not loan them out. This is a shame because if this Fantagraphics Pogo collection is as successful as I believe it will be, more students may find their way to Kelly's work. R.C. Harvey's "Swamp Talk" gives annotated historical references of the strips from the beginning, an epic job in of itself. Pogo was more than a political satire. Kelly was in a league of one when it came to social commentary in the comic strips. By the time Kelly decided to add hard-core political satire to Pogo in 1952, Al Capp was marrying off his title character Li'l Abner to Daisy May. He told Life that social commentary was suicide in a comic strip and he would not do it until the time was right to bring it back. He changed his strip to more of a traditional marriage strip. This left the hole that would be filled by Pogo. Harvey has his job cut out for him starting in the next volume if he is to continue to trace the social commentary and inside jokes of Walt Kelly. Harvey and Thompson are like sponges in the way they have compiled information concerning Kelly's work. Anything they write is worth reading for the ardent Pogo fan. It should also be noted that R.C. Harvey also wrote the introductions to Fantagraphics's previous run of Pogo compilations. This set stopped abruptly at volume 11 with the February 12, 1954 return of "Molester" Mole MacAroney. For ten years, we have waited for this saga to continue. Indeed, this new set is a far superior product. May all the volumes be as beautifully crafted as the one I have in my hand. 25 of 25 people found the following review helpful. Magnificent! By H. Beckman Aaaaaaah. A great sigh of relief after the long wait for this edition. And now we understand the delay. The production quality is exceptional (paper, binding, print quality, etc.), the dust jacket frameable, and the format (size) allows for reproduction of the strips in their originally published size. The Sunday full-color strips are reproduced from Kelly's original art! The binding in particular is superbly flexible in anticipation of much *much* use. The editors have provided nice (brief) annotation of each strip, so that the immediate cultural context of Kelly's strips is accessible to those -- today and in the future -- who did not have the exquisite experience of opening each day's newspaper to a fresh Pogo strip that *slammed* the pretense of American life as we were living it. As a fussy editor I am *so* impressed with this volume. And for a very reasonable price. Thank you Fantagraphics. Remember -- while "ars longa est," vita is too short. Please don't make us wait forever for volume II. I still go Pogo. 8 of 8 people found the following review helpful. A Wonderful Book! By W. DeWald We have been blessed with many great books of classic comic strip reprints in the last several years thanks to the folks at IDW and Fantagraphics and this one certainly ranks near the top of the list. I particularly appreciate the fact that these books have reprinted the strips in a size that actually allows my aging eyes to read them with ease--particularly important with Pogo since Walt Kelley was an absolute master with words. This strip has it all--captivating characters, laugh out loud humor, warmth, distinctive art--even lettering that enhances the strip. There is absolutely no question I will purchase all 12 volumes of this series. If you have never had the pleasure of exploring the swamp with Pogo and friends you are in for an incredible treat--and if you are a long-time fan as I am you will be quickly be charmed and

delighted once again. A simply outstanding book!

The first volume of the second-most requested strip collection reprint in Fantagraphics' history. Walt Kelly started his career at age 13 in Connecticut as a cartoonist and reporter for the Bridgeport Post. In 1935, he moved to Los Angeles and joined the Walt Disney Studio, where he worked on classic animated films, including Pinocchio, Dumbo, and Fantasia. Rather than take sides in a bitter labor strike, he moved back east in 1941 and began drawing comic books. It was during this time that Kelly created Pogo Possum. The character first appeared in Animal Comics as a secondary player in the Albert the Alligator feature. It didn't take long until Pogo became the comics leading character. After WWII, Kelly became artistic director at the New York Star, where he turned Pogo into a daily strip. By late 1949, Pogo appeared in hundreds of newspapers. Until his death in 1973, Kelly produced a feature that has become widely cherished among casual readers and aficionados alike. Kelly blended nonsense language, poetry, and political and social satire to make Pogo an essential contribution to American intellectual comics. As the strip progressed, it became a hilarious platform for Kelly's scathing political views in which he skewered national bogeymen like J. Edgar Hoover, Joseph McCarthy, George Wallace, and Richard Nixon. Walt Kelly started when newspaper strips shied away from politics Pogo was ahead of its time and ahead of later strips (such as Doonesbury and The Boondocks) that tackled political issues. Our first (of 12) volume reprints approximately the first two years of Pogo dailies and (for the first time) full-color Sundays. This first volume also introduces such enduring supporting characters as Porkypine, Churchy LaFemme, Beauregard Bugleboy, Seminole Sam, Howland Owl, and many others. And for Christmas, 1949, Kelly started his tradition of regaling his readers with his infamously and gloriously mangled Christmas carols. Special features in this sumptuous premiere volume, which is produced with the full cooperation of Kelly's heirs, include a biographical introduction by Kelly biographer Steve Thompson, an extensive section by comics historian R. C. Harvey explaining some of the more obscure current references of the time, a foreword by legendary columnist Jimmy Breslin, and more. 32 pages of full-color and 320 pages of black-and-white comics

...[An] essential purchase for any collection that values comic-strip reprints is finally available. ...[T]he inventive wordplay, idiosyncratic swamp patter, and goofy slapstick are all in full effect right from the start, as is the broad cast of loony critters... Due to run 12 volumes, this collection completes the holy triffecta, along with Charles Schulz Peanuts and George Herriman's Krazy Kat, of comic strips whose influence cannot be overstated. - Ian Chipman, Booklist
If Walt Kelly had written regular books, he might be recognized today as one of the finest satirists of the 20th Century. As a wizard of wordplay he might well be mentioned, if not in the same breath with Lewis Carroll and Edward Lear, then in the very next. - Chicago Sun-Times (Starred)
This exceptional first volume of the collected adventures of Pogo Possum should remind readers of the substantial legacy left behind by Kelly.... The volume is beautifully put together, including excellent insights into Kelly and his work ... Kelly was able to blend hilarious humor, exceptional storytelling, keen political satire, and brilliant wordplay into a strip that could be appreciated both by children and adults. - Publishers Weekly
The good news: it's here, it's real. The better news: it's incredible. Walt Kelly's lively, robust, and poetic world is faithfully and lovingly produced... Fantagraphics knew this first volume would be scrutinized by hardcore Pogo fans, and they've outdone expectations - Alex Carr, Omnivoracious (.com)
The biggest revelation of reading the first two years of Pogo is how polished and funny the strip was right from the start, and also how nearly every Pogo panel is a delight unto itself. ...[T]here's a classic Pogo moment on just about every page of this book. - Noel Murray, The A.V. Club
The congenial Pogo Possum and his swampland friends... spring to life in this collection of daily and Sunday comics, filled with Kelly's characteristic wordplay. One hopes this will introduce a new generation to this comic, satiric masterwork. - The Globe and Mail
Kelly's drawings are just magnificent, and his sophisticated writing style was far ahead of its time. Its time has come and Fantagraphics has gone out of its way to ensure the best possible copies of these rare strips were found, restored and preserved perfectly here for all time... A great gift for anyone especially you. - Jerry Beck, Cartoon Brew
Walt Kelly's wit and charm is unmatched in the history of sequential storytelling, and is in evidence here fully developed. I'd get this book for Jimmy Breslin's introduction alone. Go. Read this. You'll charm the pants off of yourself. - Mike Gold, ComicMix
Walt Kelly's Pogo... is justifiably hailed as one of the great achievements of the postwar comic strip.... This wonderful first volume of a projected 12-volume series contains the strip's first two official years... I salute this launch... [Rating] 9/10 - Michael Barrett, PopMatters
This strip is funny, well-drawn, and features a huge mass of likeable characters doing entertaining things. Put it together with Fantagraphics' excellent presentation, and you have a definite must-buy. - Sean Gaffney, Manga Bookshelf
Timeless and magical, Pogo is a giant of world literature, not simply comics, and this magnificent edition should be the pride of every home's bookshelf. - Win Wiacek, Now Read This!
About the Author
Walt Kelly is the creator of the legendary Pogo comic strip. He was born in 1913 and passed away in 1973.