Buster Brown Encyclopedia Article

Buster Brown

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Buster Brown

Buster Brown first appeared in the *New York Herald* on May 4, 1902. Accompanied by his dog Tige, Buster Brown was a mischievous young boy given to playing practical jokes. He resolved weekly to improve his ways, but always strayed. The strip was the second major success for Richard Outcault (1863-1928) who had earlier created the Yellow Kid. Outcault licensed the image and the name of his character to a wide variety of manufactures and the name Buster Brown is probably more familiar to Americans as a brand of shoes or children's clothing than as the title of a comic strip. Unlike Outcault's early work *Buster Brown* was distinctly a comic strip appearing weekly in twelve panel full page stories. Once again William Randolph Hearst lured Outcault to his newspapers and *Buster Brown* commencing there January 21, 1906. The resulting court cases over copyright determined that Outcault owned all subsidiary rights to the Buster Brown name having purchased them for $2 when he signed with the *Herald* to produce the strip. Outcault derived considerable income from his licensing efforts and his advertising agency, which produced over 10,000 advertisements for Buster Brown related products. The last original episode of the strip was published December 11, 1921.

Further Reading:

Gordon, Ian. *Comic Strips and Consumer Culture, 1890-1945.* Washington, D.C., Smithsonian Institution Press, 1998.