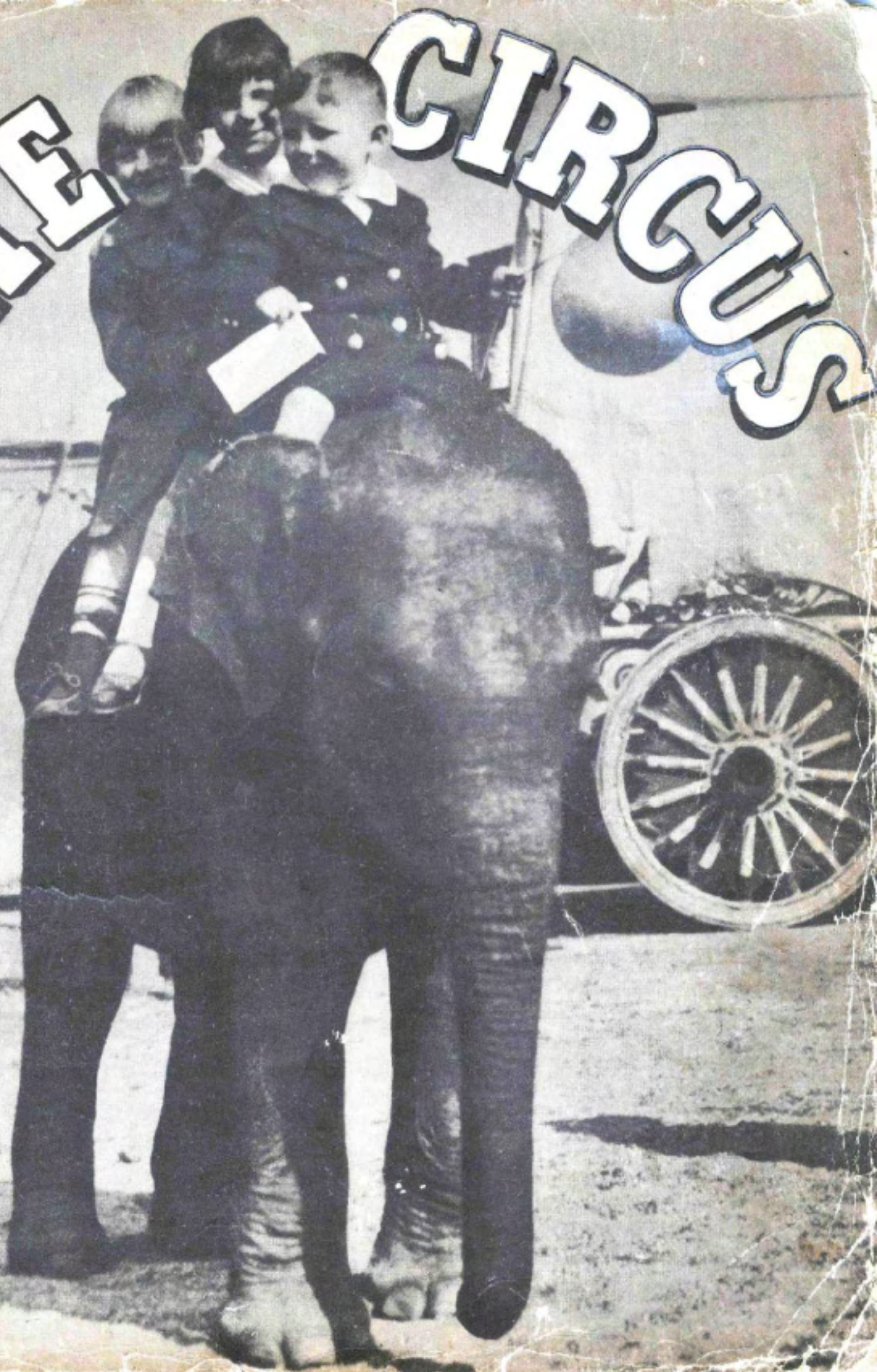


# THE CIRCUS



No. 2098

# THE CIRCUS

By KLARA E. KNECHT

Educational Director of Hagenbeck-Wallace Circus



*Contributing Photographers*

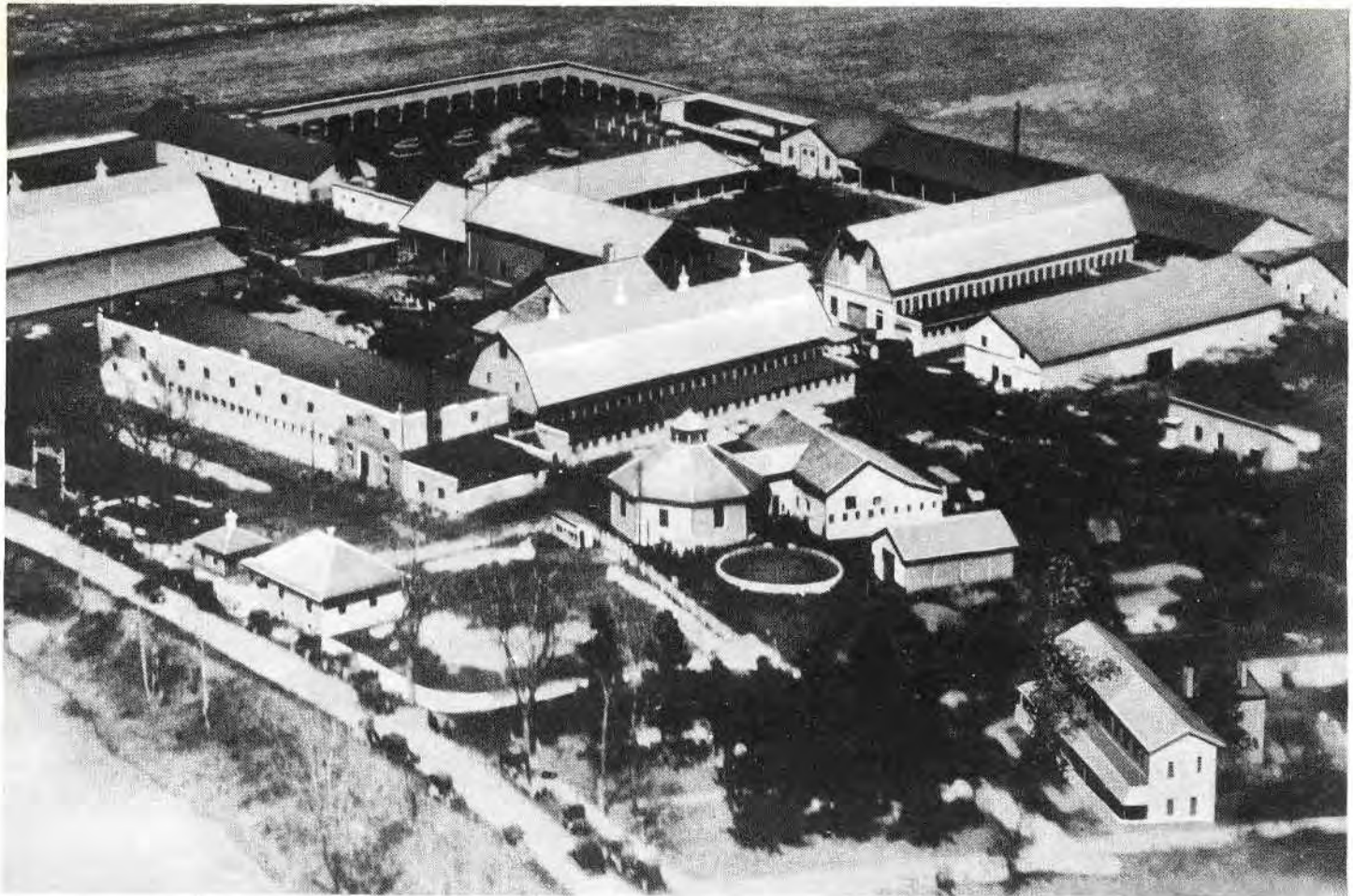
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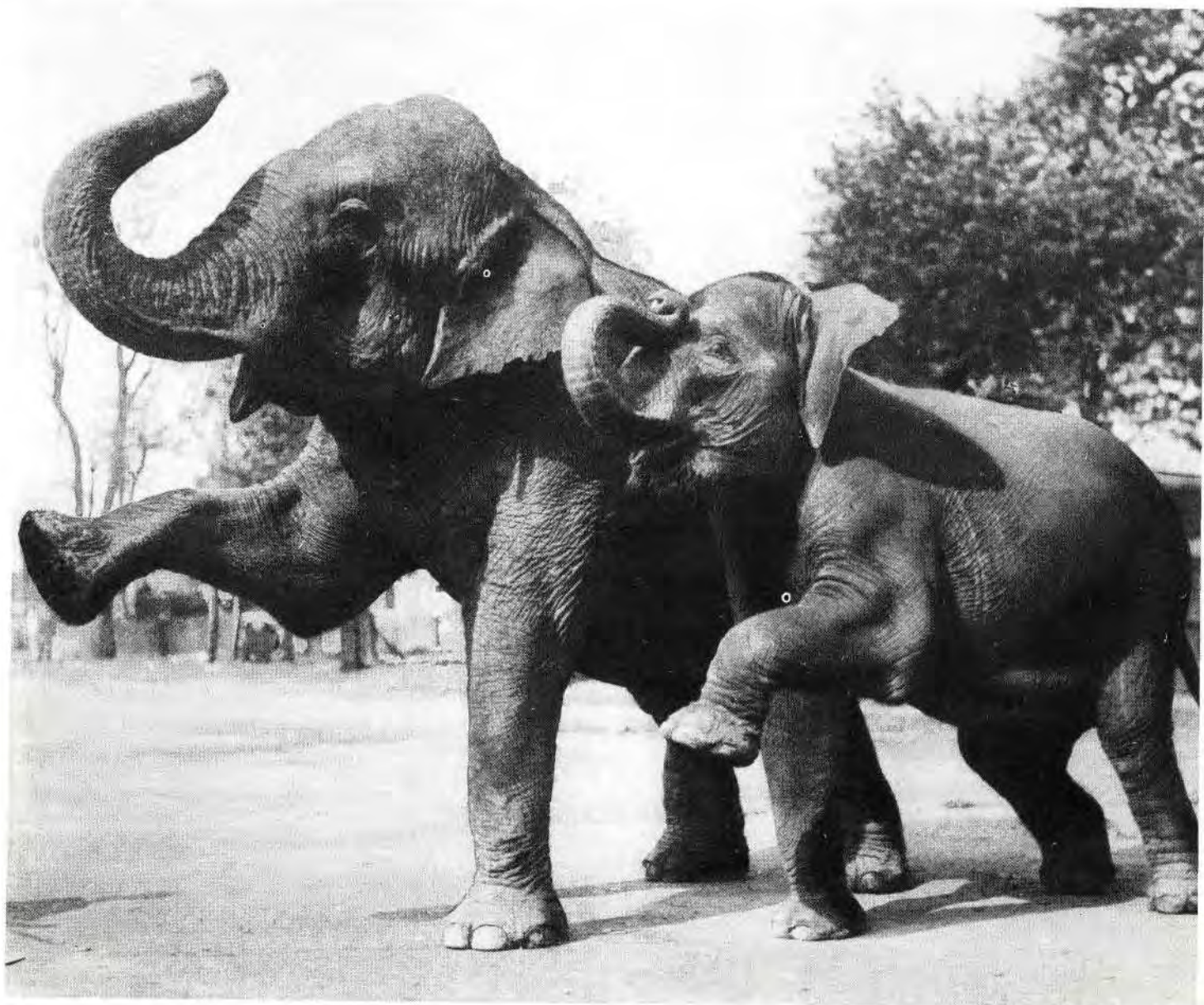
Haven't you often wondered where the circus goes in winter? This is the winter home of the Hagenbeck-Wallace Circus. It is called "Winter Quarters."

During the winter months, this huge place of many acres is a regular beehive of industry and activity. All preparations for the next season's tour are made. Hundreds of artists and carpenters are busy constructing, ornamenting and rebuilding cages, wagons, chariots and floats. New tents are made. Corps of harness-makers and sewing-women are busy all winter making fine new harness, brocaded saddle-cloths and gorgeous plush and velvet robes for the camels and elephants. Thousands of dazzling sequins and tiny mirrors are sewed onto the robes by hand. New costumes are made each year for the Grand Entry or Tournament. Sleeping cars are overhauled and repainted. New animals are purchased and have to be taught their tricks. The old animals keep practicing so they will not forget their routine when the circus starts its yearly trip.

Here are Old Trilby and little Tessie. Trilby is teaching little Tessie a new dance step.

On the circus, during the winter, all baby elephants must go to school—just as you boys and girls do—to learn their lessons. They are taken to the training schools along with an older elephant. The older one knows her lessons but she will help to teach the little ones to walk on their hind legs, to stand on their heads, sit up straight on a tub, and ever so many more amusing things.

Tessie will watch Trilby closely as she does her tricks and then will try to do them herself. When a baby elephant does his tricks well he is given a carrot to eat. How elephants love carrots!



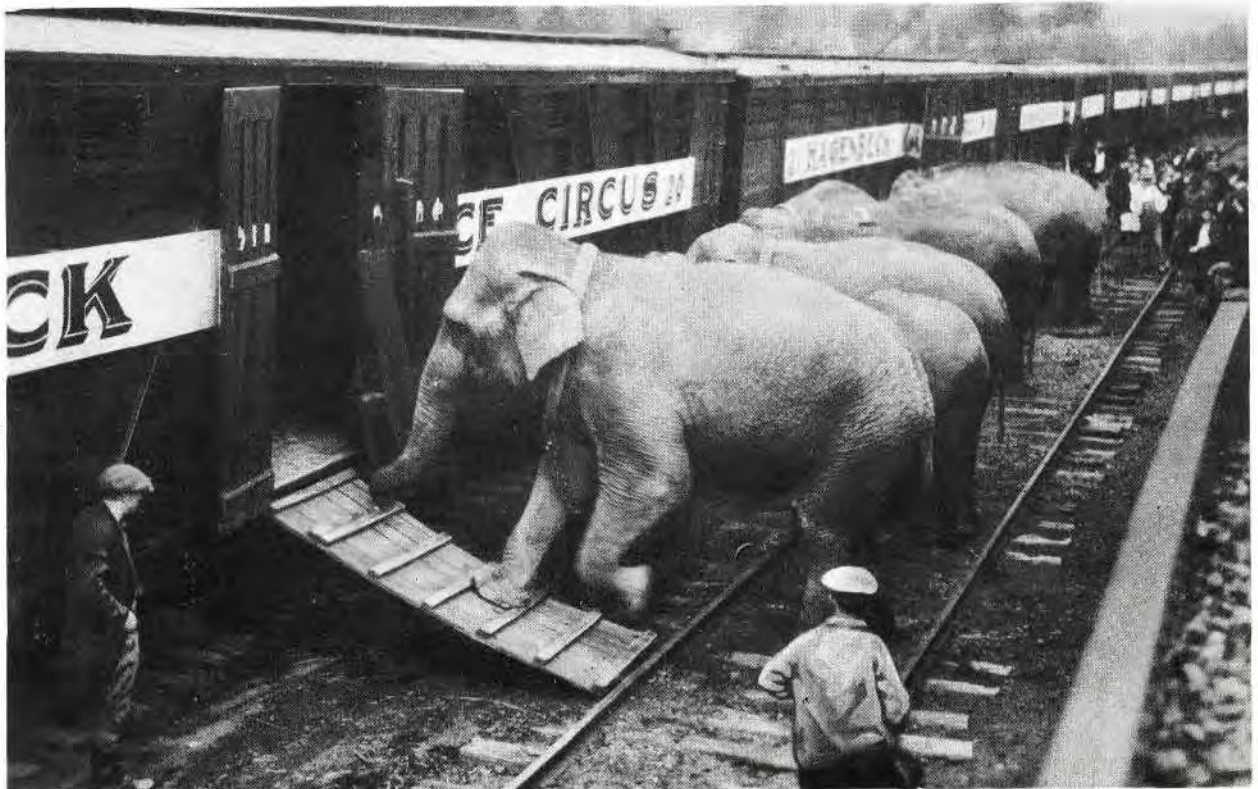


Several weeks before the circus leaves Winter Quarters, the hundreds and hundreds of working horses are brought in to the barns from the pastures where they have been roaming and grazing all winter. The ring, or performing, horses have been brought in earlier, for they have been in training for some time. Here they come! Aren't they wonderful creatures? Most circus horses are either white or gray, because white and gray horses are more conspicuous and can be seen from a greater distance.

After all the horses are rounded up and are in the stables, they are clipped, curried and brushed until their sleek, trim coats gleam like burnished metal. Their hoofs are trimmed and polished until they shine; their manes and tails are combed and brushed, braided or crimped into long waves. They are then hitched in teams of four, six or eight and are driven about Quarters and out on the highways to get them accustomed to their teammates and being so paired.



The wild animals are shifted from their winter dens to the clean, roomy cages that are to be their summer homes. The elephants are put into their specially-built railway cars, as are the camels, the gorgeous ring horses, the zebras, and giraffes. Soon all is ready; *clang!* goes the bell; the whistle toots; they're off—the season has begun.



Hundreds and hundreds of people—up before daylight and down to the railroad yards—waiting! waiting! waiting! It seems so long before we hear the cry, “Here she comes!” and the engine pulling the long train of gaily painted cars comes into view. Some of the teamsters and razorbacks are up and ready for work. See them hopping off the cars! Almost before the train comes to a halt, the work horses are unloaded, the runways are pulled into place and the task of unloading begins.

The circus travels in sections, sometimes two and sometimes three. This is the first section, or “Flying Squadron,” as the circus folk call it. It carries the cook house and equipment, the stables and stable wagons and some of the work elephants. The second section is called the “Lumber Train” and carries the heavy seat-wagons, the poles, the canvas-wagons and the menagerie cages. On the last section are the pullmans for the executive staff and performers.





Here are Trilby, Josky, Tessie, Tillie, and the other elephants coming out of the cars, ready for their day's work. These great, lumbering, lovable creatures are among the first to be unloaded from the stock cars. They are able and willing workers and are a great help to the men and the horses in moving the heavy wagons and ponderous equipment about. They like to work and also to play. Elephants put their whole souls into everything they do. They learn quickly, too, and know just how to push the wagons into the right places; how to shove poles and oh, so many more things.

The elephants are the best loved of all circus animals and well they may be, for it wouldn't be a circus without the elephants.

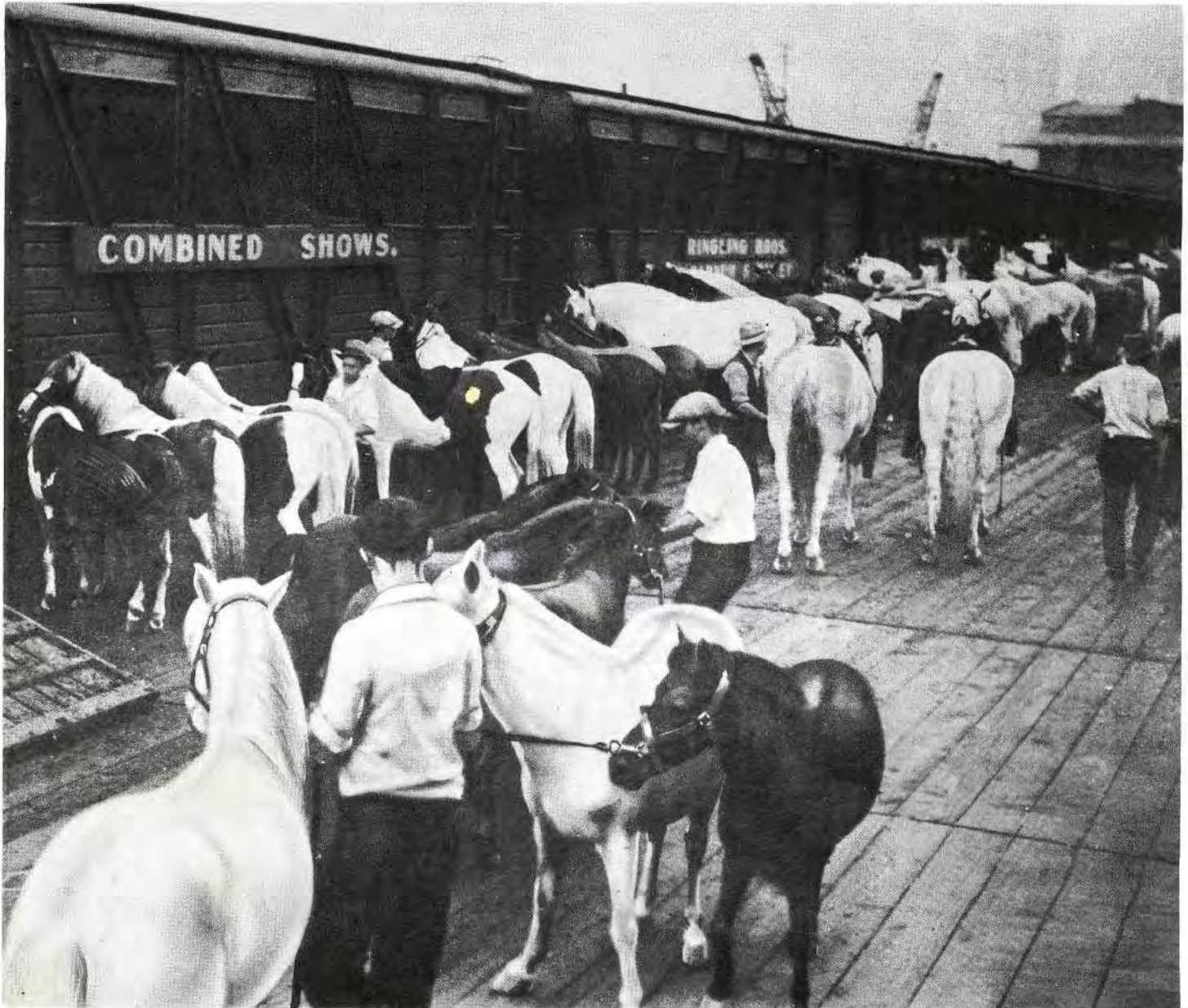


Here we see the men, called Razor-backs, unloading the wagons from the flat cars. The team of horses in the foreground is the Pull-over team. They pull the wagons over the ends of the flats onto the runway. You can see the runway at the left side of the picture. The wagons are kept from rushing down the runway by means of snubbing posts along the sides of the flats. A rope, fastened to the back of the wagon, is wound round the snubbing post. A man, called a snubber, lets the rope unwind and the wagon is slowly lowered to the ground. Then a team of horses, called the Pull-away team, pulls the wagon away from the tracks. After this the great six- and eight-horse teams, called the Haul-away teams, haul the wagons down the road to the lot. The man bending over in front of the wagon is the poler. He guides the wagon, by means of the tongue, down the runway to the ground.

The circus is very proud of its horses and always keeps them beautifully groomed, sleek and shiny with polished hoofs and wavy manes and tails.

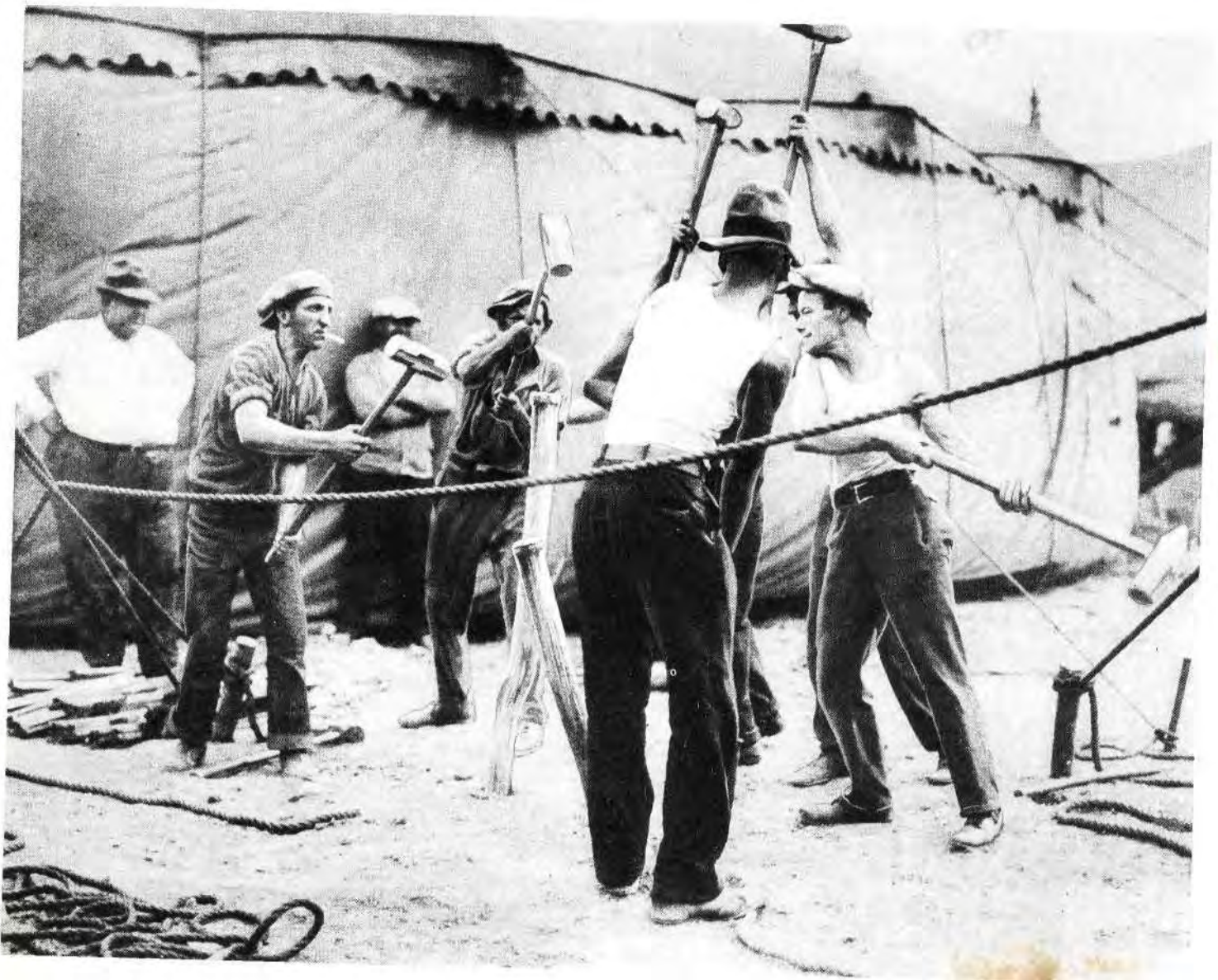
These are the lovely ring horses or Rosin-backs as they are called by the circus folk. Rosin-backs are so called because their riders sprinkle their backs with powdered rosin to keep them from slipping when riding around the ring without any saddles.

Arabian horses are sometimes used as rosin-backs while Belgian, Percherons and Clydesdales are used for the baggage or working horses. Some of these working horses will weigh almost a ton and will stand sixteen hands high.



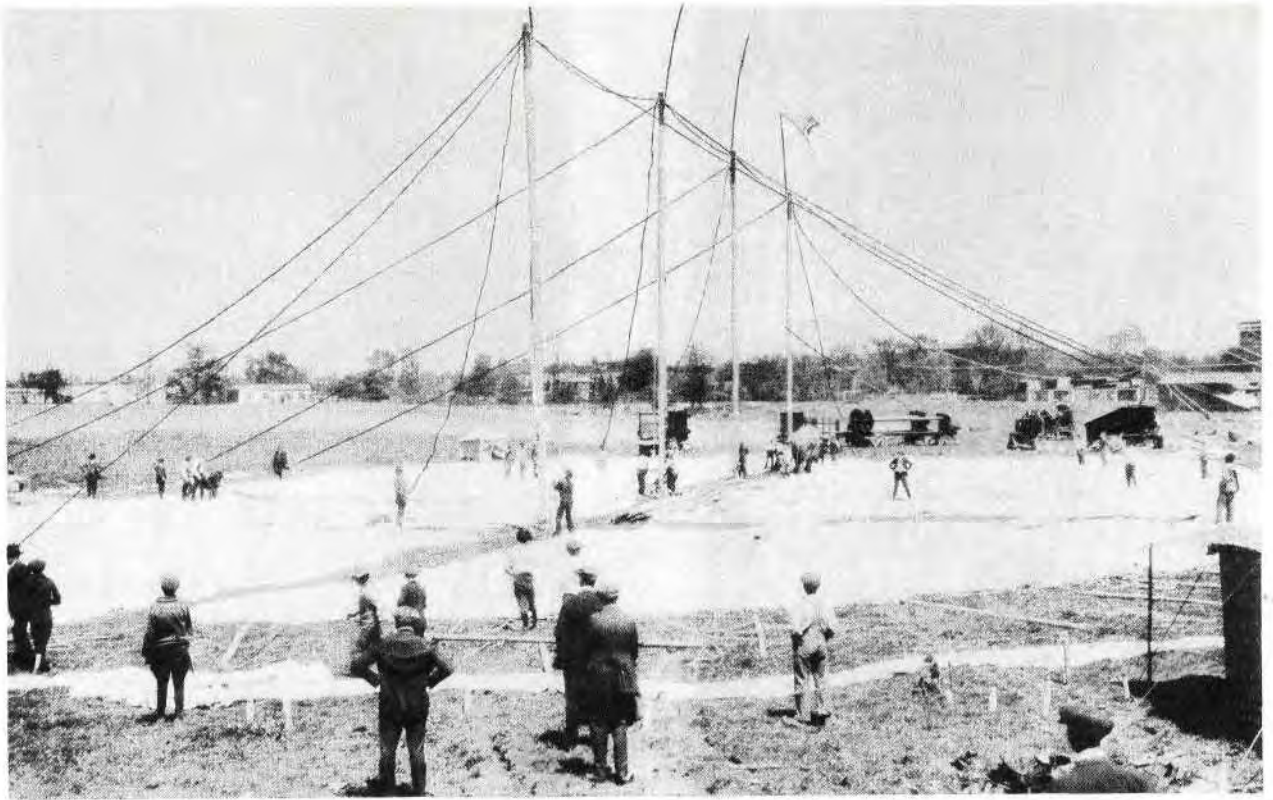


Up she goes! The first center pole is being raised. Each center pole is sixty feet long and weighs about nine hundred pounds. It takes many strong arms and horses to raise it. Usually four or six center poles hold the Big Top. Besides holding the Big Top, the center poles hold the main falls, the ropes, pulleys and electric light apparatus by means of a huge steel ring, called the "bale ring." The bale rings are slipped over the lower ends of the center poles before they are raised. After the poles are up, the canvas, ropes and light falls are fastened to the bale rings. They are then pulled to the top of the poles, carrying aloft all the rigging. The center poles are fastened to one another by means of strong cables.



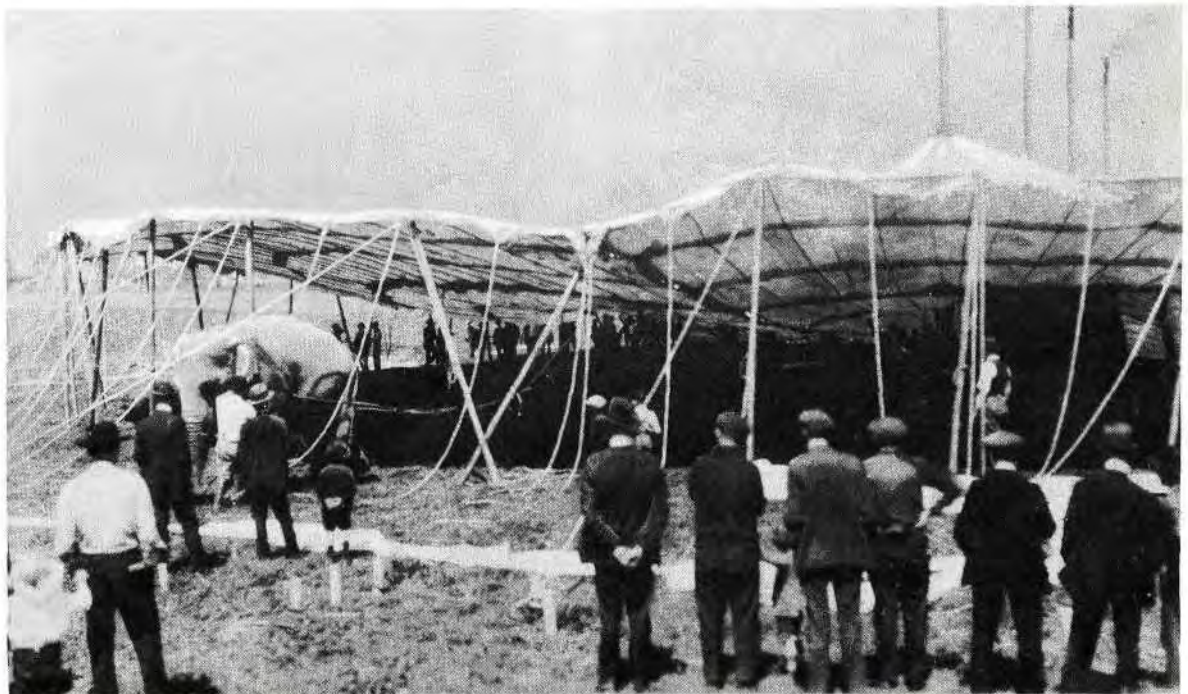
Did you ever watch the sledge gang driving stakes on a circus lot? Here they are—six strong men, swinging their heavy sledge hammers, one after the other, driving the long stakes deep into the ground. Rhythm and perfect timing are needed most in driving stakes. Sometimes the men sing funny little songs as they work and their sledges hit the stakes in perfect time with the music. They learn to swing their sledges so perfectly that it is seldom that one of them misses a stroke—to do so might cause a serious injury to someone.

More than two thousand stakes are used in setting up a large circus and rarely is a single stake lost in an entire season. They are counted each night. Each week, the tops of the stakes are given a fresh coat of paint.



When the center poles are up, the canvas is spread, laced together and fastened to the bale rings that carry it to the top of the poles. In the lower picture you can see Topsy pulling up the bale rings.

When the top is one-third the way up, the side poles are set. When the tent is half-way up, the quarter poles are put into place. After the top is up, the side walls are hung. You can see them lying on the ground.





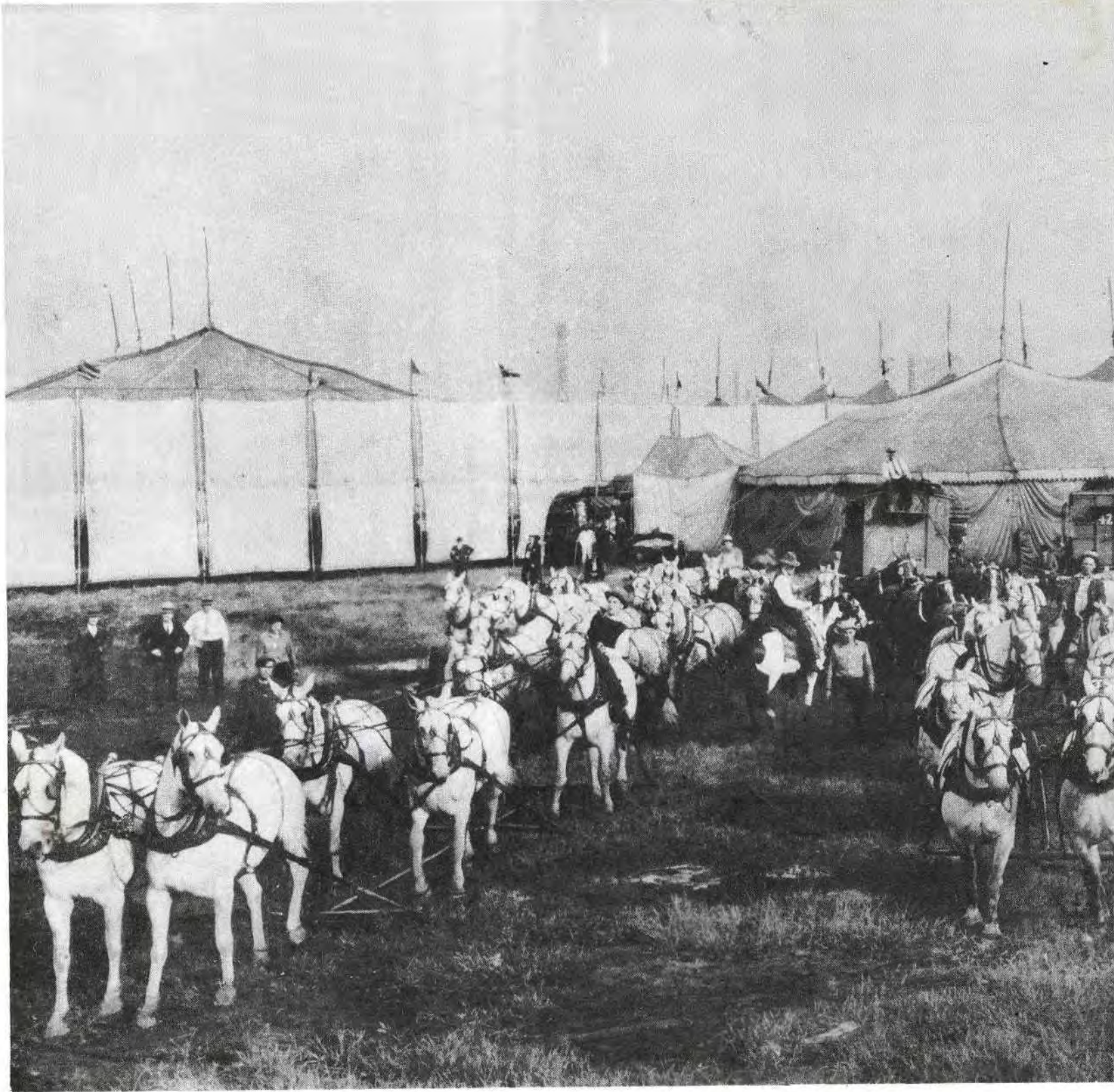
The cook-house is the first wagon to be unloaded from the train early every morning. The chefs must start breakfast, for the circus folk must eat just as soon as possible. The big ranges and steam wagons are set up; the steam gotten into the boilers and forced through the pipes to the ranges and steam tables. This is a picture of the steam wagon. Soups and coffee are made in those huge kettles and carried into the cook tent. You can see part of the cook tent at the right of the steam wagon. By the time the last section has arrived, breakfast is ready, and everyone is ready for breakfast. What a fine breakfast it is—fruit, cereal, ham, bacon, eggs, and coffee.

All the food that the circus eats is bought in the town in which the circus is showing. More than three thousand meals are served each day.

In the dining tent, there are rows and rows of long tables. Each person has his own place at the tables. The riders sit together at one table, the bandmen at another, the clowns together at their table, the acrobats at theirs and so on. They are all served the same kind of food and can have just as much of it as they wish. The dining tent is divided by a canvas wall into two parts—a long end where the workmen eat and a short end for the executive staff and performers.

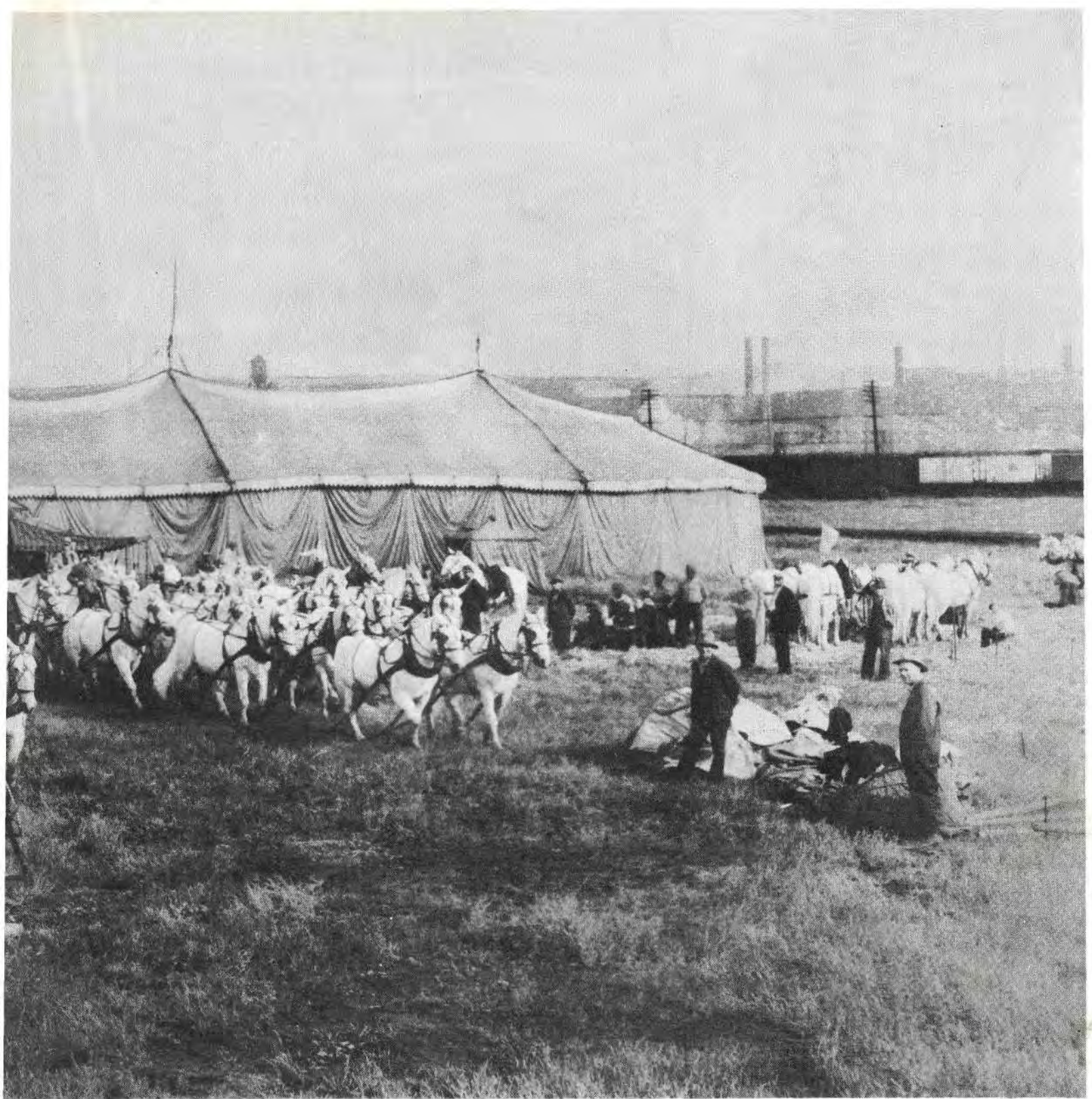
When a meal is ready to be served, a flag is raised on top of the dining tent, which can be seen from all parts of the circus lot. As long as the flag is flying from the top of the dining tent, the workingmen and the performers can go in and eat, but when it comes down, they have to wait until it goes up again before they can get anything to eat.





This is a picture seldom, if ever, seen. Sixty-four working horses, in teams of six and eight, pulling a heavy wagon that has become mired in the soft earth. The wagons are built with large hook-rings along both sides and the front, to which can be hitched many teams of horses.

One of the things the circus dreads most is wet weather and mud. A soft,

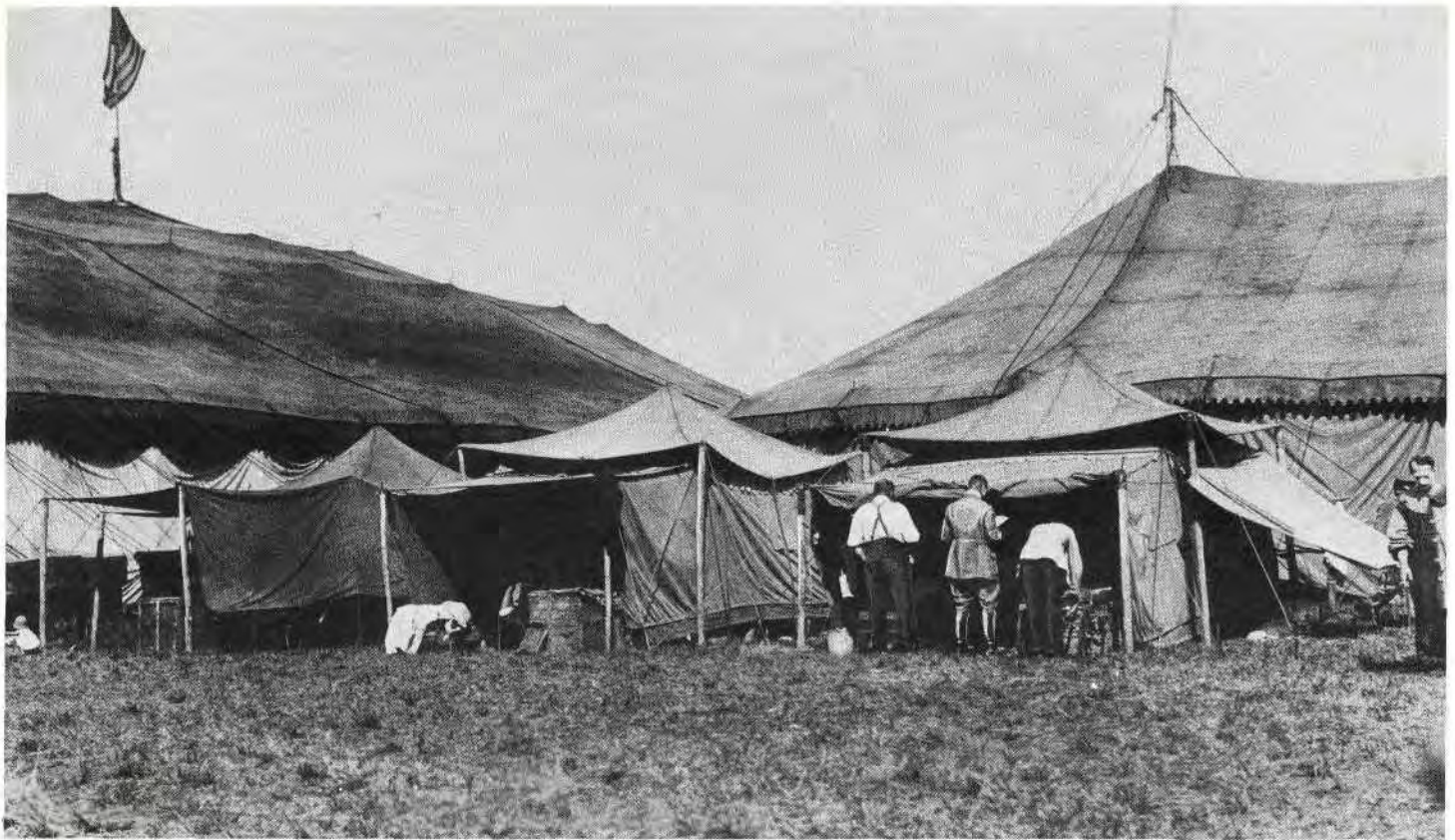


muddy lot; wet, heavy canvas; water-soaked ropes and swollen stakes mean a lot of trouble to the show. Sometimes a wagon has to be unloaded, moved to firmer ground and reloaded. Sometimes it takes all night to move the show off a wet lot, where ordinarily it takes but three or four hours. That means little or no sleep for the tired, weary men, horses and elephants.

The trumpets blow, the bugles play! Long before the carved and gilded band wagon comes into view, we feel the thrill of stirring, martial music—*the parade is coming!*

Ornate cages of crimson-and-gold in which tawny tigers and shaggy lions pace restlessly to and fro—resplendent tableau wagons, shining and gleaming in the sunlight—lovely ladies riding in jewel-bedecked chairs swung between stately beasts from the desert—troupes of clowns—tons and tons of wise old elephants holding onto one another's tails—gay, colorful cowboys and cowgirls from the vast plains of the Golden West—a mile of gorgeous splendor brought up at the rear by the steam calliope, piercing the air with its shrill, staccato notes—The Circus Parade, most colorful spectacle of the circus.





The back-yard is that part of the circus just behind the Big Top, where the performers sit and rest during the day, and where they have the dressing tents, stables, cook-house and the dozens of other tops.

It is a strange and mysterious place—well guarded, too. Folk of the outside world rarely have an opportunity of visiting in the back-yard. Here one feels he is in a different land. He finds people of all nationalities, some talking in their native tongue. They are all wonderful folk. They are family folk, for the most part—fathers, mothers and children; husbands and wives; brothers and sisters. One generation after another has followed this interesting life, usually in the same line.

Here in the back-yard you may see some clowns and acrobats having a baseball game. There others are pitching horseshoes or playing chess. Some of the girls may be playing bridge, writing letters, sewing, washing their fine silk tights or perhaps having a tea party. Others are practicing old tricks or trying new ones. Everyone is busy—everyone is happy—the healthiest, happiest, most generous and interesting company in the whole world.



Meet the giant! Isn't he the biggest fellow you ever saw? He stands eight feet, four inches tall. Of course, all his hats, shoes and clothes have to be made to special order. His finger ring is as large around as a fifty-cent piece. Doesn't he look fine in his gorgeous uniform? He is the drum major and leads the circus band as they parade around the arena.

On the circus train, he sleeps in a berth twice as long as an ordinary one and it has no upper berth over it. He would always be bumping his head if there were. On rainy days, I have seen him come across the back-yard to the cook-house carrying four or five midgets in his arms so they wouldn't get their little feet wet.

The big, big giant and the little, tiny midgets perform in the side-show with the other strange and curious people called the Freaks.

One of the most famous performers who has ever been on the circus is one whom all children love — *Tom Mix*. With Tom in his circus performance, of course, is his equally famous horse, Tony. Here Tom is having a chat with a visitor in the back-yard between shows. Doesn't he look splendid in his gorgeous white outfit and his cowboy hat?

Tom Mix is an expert silversmith and makes all the silver trappings on his bridles and saddles. He tools the leather on his boots and belts also. He made the band on his wrist watch and you can see the silver dollars that he used on it for decorations.

Perhaps you have seen Tom Mix in the movies. Tom told me that he likes living and performing on the circus just as much as he does acting in pictures.



The circus doctor is a very busy man. He is a real family doctor—sympathetic, patient and understanding. His duty is to keep the circus folk in good health. There are always bruised knees or heads, broken bones, colds, headaches, sprains, cuts and wounds that require his attention. He treats artists and roustabouts with the same courtesy and efficiency. He also treats persons in the audience when necessary.

This is a picture of the interior of the hospital wagon. It is finished in white enamel, very well ventilated and outfitted with the most modern equipment, electric sterilizer, operating table, instrument table, an array of fine instruments, shelves for the drugs and ointments, and cupboards where the extra supplies are stored.



This picture shows the interior of a circus-star's private dressing tent. Isn't it a comfortable, cozy looking place? See the easy reclining chairs, soft rugs, trunks with gay cretonne linings and covers, tables, flowers, books and the pet bull-dogs.

There is also a very large dressing tent, divided into three parts. One end is for the lady performers, who are not stars, and the other end is for the gentlemen. Between the two ends is the wardrobe department where the lovely costumes, robes, hats and coats for the Tournament are kept—each in its own white muslin bag.

In these cozy little tents, the performers live during the day. It is here that they gather their little parties and entertain their friends who have come to spend the day with them on the lot.



This trim looking man with the shiny top-hat, the cutaway coat, white riding breeches and patent leather boots is the Equestrian Director—the man who blows the whistle and keeps the circus performance clicking. It is his job to see that the vast circus performance is kept moving without a hitch.

He plans the program and, as each act is finished, he blows his whistle, giving the cue for the entrance of the next act. Much of the show's success depends upon the equestrian director.

Did you ever notice that when the whistle blows the music of the band changes? The bandmaster listens for the whistle and changes the tempo of his music to fit the acts that are performing in the rings.

The equestrian director has absolute charge of the back-yard—his word is law and it is his duty to keep peace and harmony among the performers at all times.

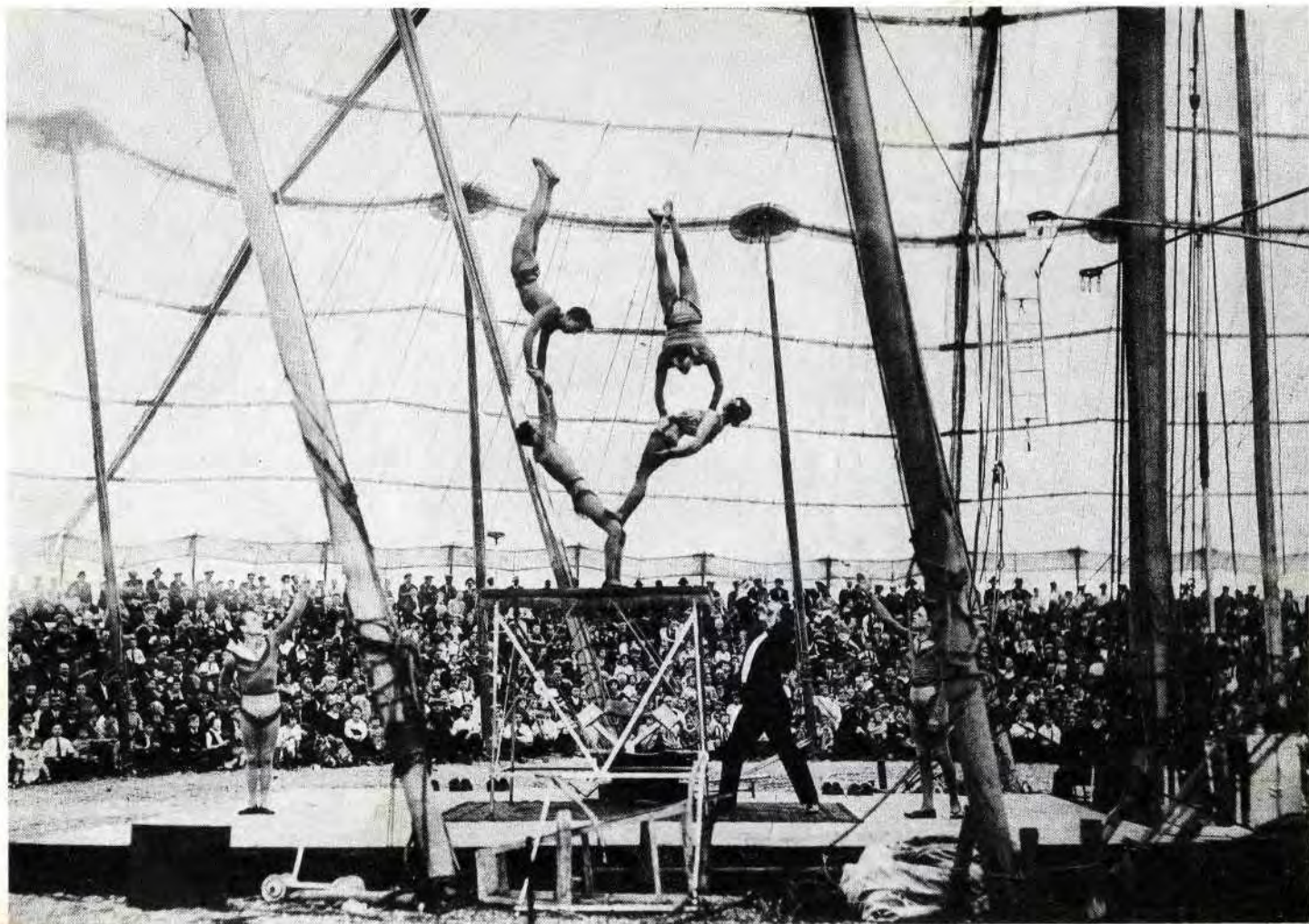
Sometimes the equestrian director is called the Ring Master.





Listen! There is the first whistle blown by the equestrian director. That means "Dress!" What a change in the back-yard! Everyone hurries to get ready. Twenty minutes later, the second whistle. It means "Mount and in places!" The back-yard is transformed into a fairyland—scores of caparisoned horses with brocaded saddle-cloths reflecting the sunlight; knights on prancing steeds; kings with crowns of jewels; princesses; butterflies with countless rays shining from a fretwork of dazzling sequins; waving plumes; gorgeous flags—color everywhere.

The third whistle—"Move forward!" A fanfare of trumpets, a roll of drums, and the band plays. Slowly, majestically, the tournament moves through the big gates, once around the arena, and out into the back-yard. What a change! Down from throne, float, and horse, they come—hurrying, scurrying, everything moving away from the back door—the horses to the stables, the performers to their tents to dress for their acts to come. The tournament is over. The big show has begun.



Inside the show goes on. We sit in breathless wonder. Overhead, graceful aerialists flinging themselves from one to the other with unaccountable accuracy; wire-walkers dancing and twirling on wires hardly larger than a thread; beautiful ladies riding galloping horses; sea-lions juggling better than men.

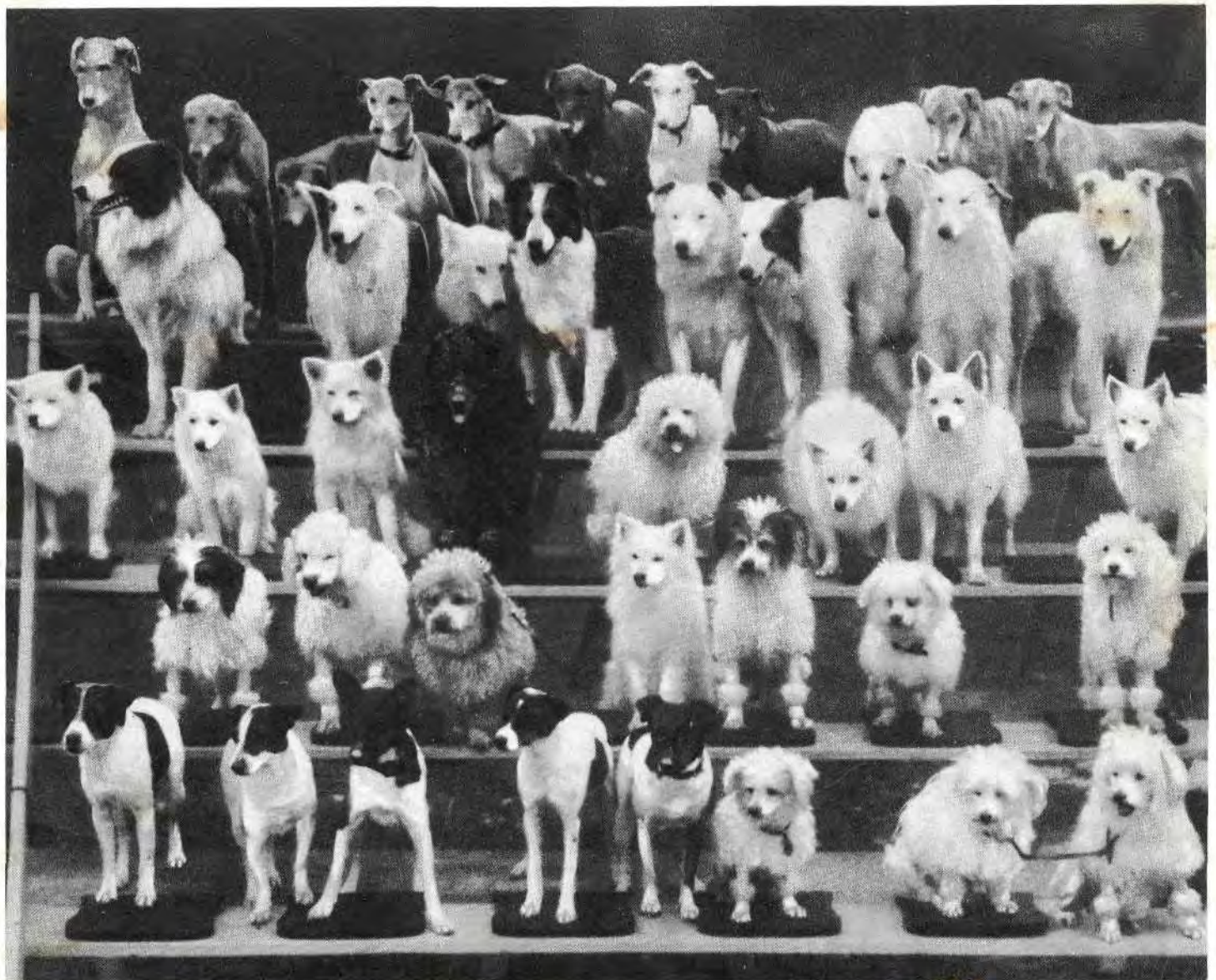
Events come thick and fast, each more absorbing than the last. The big gates at the side fairly bubble out a profusion of clowns, elephants, riders, acrobats—each to do his own particular stunt and in good time disappear in a cloud of glory, tanbark and sawdust.

And all the while, the band plays stirring, thrilling music—none other like it in the world. Circus music sounds different from other music because of the canvas tents. Waltzes are played for the aerial and riding acts, stirring marches for the performing animals, and jazz music for the clowns and acrobats.

Here are dogs that are stars of the sawdust ring. Did you ever see so many beautiful and fine looking dogs together in one group?

The greyhounds and Russian wolfhounds are trained for racing and hurdling; the collies, the spitz and French poodles do hind-leg walking and other acrobatic tricks, and the terriers are all-around performers—they do various things, even to being clown-dogs.

The collies are smart and are easily trained, as are the terriers. The French poodles are smart too, but they are very saucy. Circus dogs love to perform and, when they do their work well, they are given a piece of candy or a bit of sugar. Once a circus dog—always a circus dog. They love the blare of the band, the noise of the Big Top, the glitter and glare, and are unhappy if taken away from the circus that they love.





All circus clowns are called “Joeys” after a very famous circus clown, Joe Grimaldi, who lived in England many, many years ago.

They are funny fellows—with feet many sizes too big; ears that look like palm-leaf fans; crazy little hats; wigs of all colors; silly faces; funny noses—Don’t you love them? Clowns are such fun, tumbling all about, tripping over nothing at all, bumping into things and never looking where they are going.

Real clowning is a serious business. It takes a keen mind and lots of study to be a good clown. They have to be thinking up funny new tricks and new and funnier clothes all the time, just to make the people laugh.

Wouldn’t you like to meet a real circus clown?



This is Clyde Beatty, a famous trainer of wild animals, and his favorite lion, Nero. Clyde Beatty is very brave and daring and goes into an arena with forty-five lions and tigers. He has taught them many fine tricks. One time, while performing in the steel arena, an angry tiger jumped upon Clyde Beatty and was clawing him when Nero leaped from his pedestal onto the tiger and saved his trainer's life.



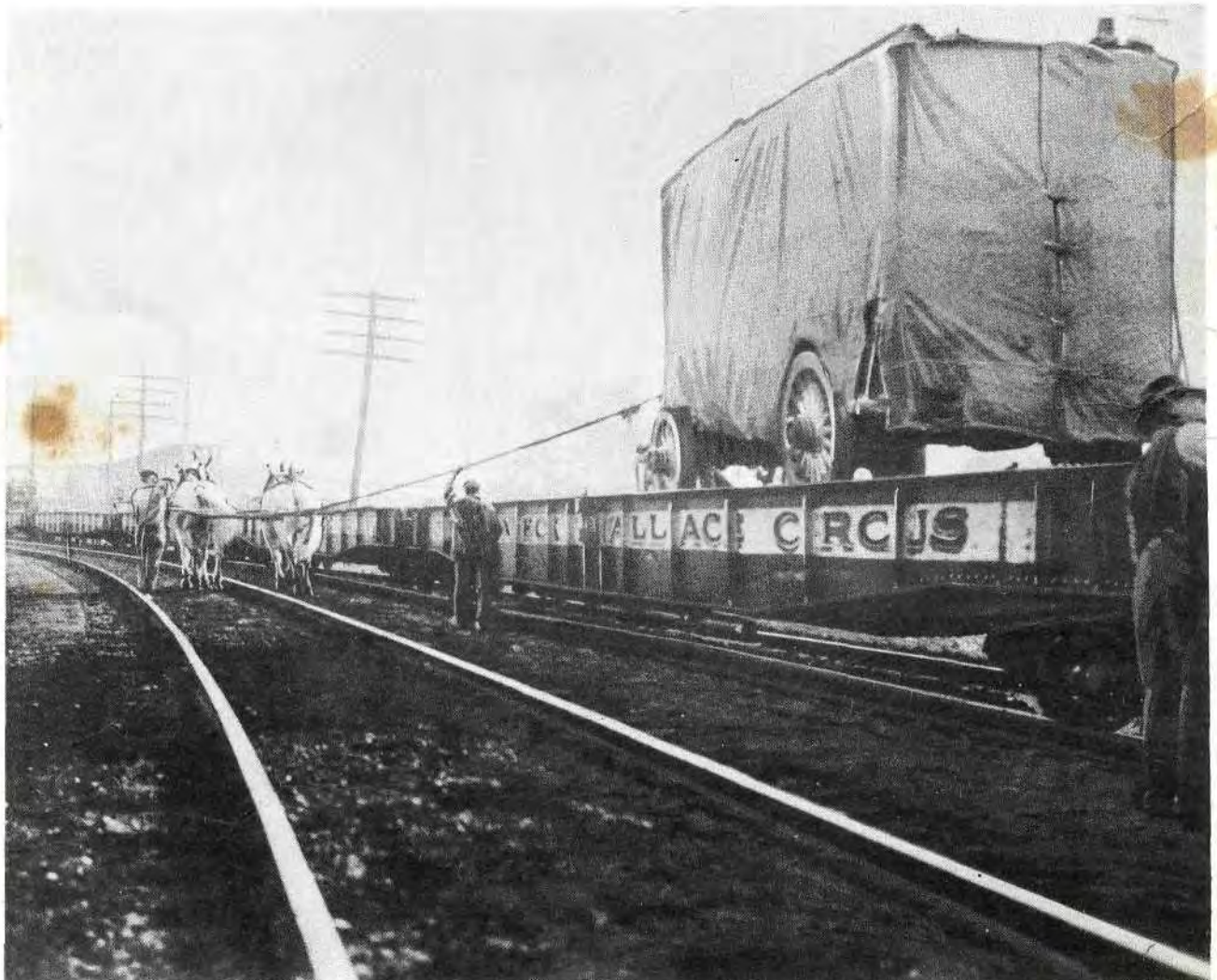
All too soon come the races! Clown races; tandem races; saddle races; "gents" flat race; Roman standing races, and sometimes an exciting chariot race! The great crowd leans forward, cheering, urging, expectant. The third time around—the horses, magnificent, thoroughbred racers, flying like the wind, now neck to neck, hoofs pounding, manes and tails flying. The bell! In a last, mad plunge, one breaks into the lead—down the home stretch, across the line to win!

The band plays the Star Spangled Banner. "All out and over," rings the cry. The throng surges toward the doors. Amid the clatter of seats being torn down, we hurry out. We stop to gaze at the Big Top, which but a short time ago was a bespangled fairyland. Now it is a huge gray shadow, waiting to be dropped to the ground like a giant balloon, unlaced, put into bundles and loaded upon the wagons.

Hoofs clattering over pavements; the clank of chains; a merry laugh; a snatch of song; the shrill bark of a dog; soft animal noises; the faint smell of the jungle; wagons rumbling and creaking as they roll into place on the flats; the call of men—*the runs at night*.

Finally all is loaded; everything is set; the signal flash of a lantern; the ring of the bell; the turn of the wheels—*away she goes!* Away into the night, leaving mystery and yearning behind—away to the next stand, where for weeks, hundreds of youngsters have been waiting, waiting for that which they love—the circus. They must not be disappointed.

The circus—a strange and beautiful world—a world all to itself—here today—elsewhere tomorrow—living forever between the opening and closing flourish of trumpets.





TIGER

*Hydrum*

*Clark*