

HOBBY-SWAPPER

Circus Fans Association of America Special



The above photographs by Robert D. Good, of Allentown, Pa., taken at Cole Bros. Circus in York, Pa. May 22, 1936. Bottom photograph shows the Lion and Mirror Bandwagon leading the street parade.

The Collector's Monthly

May 1947 - 10c

Hobby-Swapper

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HARRY M. SIMPSON

Publisher

Associate Editors

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Thomas Burnett, Camden, N.J.

C. Spencer Chambers, Syracuse, N. Y.

Dave Kelly, West Milton, Ohio

M. L. Simon, Detroit, Mich

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The Publisher Says



I dedicate this issue to the Circus Fans Association of America, on this, the month of their convention held in Dayton, Ohio. It is indeed a pleasure to honor this great organization . . . a large group who not only collect circusi-ana, but in an unselfish way, spend their time to preserve the circus of yesterday, today and tomorrow. They use the motto, "We Pay As We Go." No Annie Oakley's for this group.

To Thomas M. Gregory, president of the CFA, other officers and members, congratulations on a job well done. You have accomplished a lot during the past year, and I wish you a successful 1947 convention and season.

I wish to thank all of the contributors to the Circus Edition, and I especially wish to thank our own Associate Editor C. Spencer Chambers . . . he deserves the credit for this issue. Besides the circusi-ana, Mr. Chambers has devoted much time toward the success of this publication . . . words cannot express my appreciation of his friendship.

The official publication of the CFA is "The White Tops" edited by W. H. Hohenadel of Rochelle, Ill. "The White Tops" is one of the finest publications of its kind.

Thanks to W. L. (Bill) Montague, CFA publicity director, of West Hartford, Conn., for his cooperation in planning this CFA Special.

Sincerely,
Harry M. Simpson

Join Central Ohio Precancel Club

Dues, \$1.00 per year.
Write Hobby-Swapper
For application.

Circus Photographs

By ROBERT D. GOOD

The earliest actual photographs of the American Circus were taken in the 1870's when photography was in its infancy and more or less in the experimental stage. At that time it was an extremely expensive as well as a skilled vocation and practically all the materials as well as apparatus were commercially unavailable.

The fact that it was expensive, and because there was little or no market for circus pictures are the main reasons for so very few circus pictures being handed down to us from that period.

Before 1870 all the pictures were made from etchings, woodcuts or drawings and reproductions of some of this work are to be had. Early photographs were practically all bad compared with present day standards.

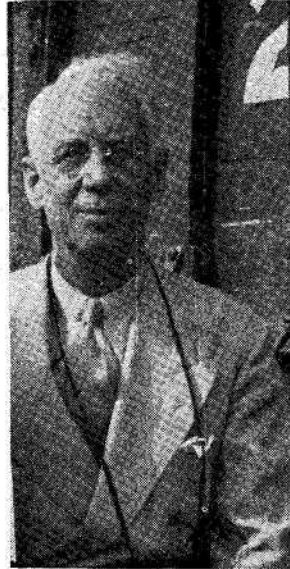
From the period 1880 to 1900 there are surprisingly few good pictures of circus subjects available. Even a great attraction like P. T. Barnum's famous elephant "Jumbo" has less than one half dozen good pictures to his credit. The 5-year turn of the Barnum and Bailey Circus in Europe was very poorly recorded as far as photographs are concerned.

It is a great pity that so few photographs were taken of the Golden Age of Circus Parades showing the marvelous free processions presented by the Forepaugh Circus, Cooper and Bailey, Sells Bros., Forepaugh Sells, Barnum and Bailey, Ringling Bros., Norris and Rowe and many more great shows of that period.

The Barnum and Bailey famous Forty Horse Team is another great parade feature of which there are about 6 photos in existence and none of them do the subject justice.

Before 1910 an ordinary camera was considered a luxury and its operation was a complete mystery to the average person. It is mainly due to the interest and foresightedness of a few forgotten old-time circus fans that some of these old pictures were re-produced and handed down to us today.

Since 1910 the public has been made "camera conscious" and ed-



THOMAS GREGORY
Pres. CFA

"My membership of more than 20 years in The Circus Fans Association has been a wonderful thing," declares Tom Gregory. "It has given me fine friendships with circus people and with other Circus Fans—friendships that can't be equalled, in my opinion, in any other association."

"The circus as a hobby provides a fuller, more interesting and intimate knowledge of this outstanding amusement enterprise, the people who make it tick and its remarkably efficient system. To the average person the circus may mean one day a year of its distinctive entertainment and glamorous environment, but to the Circus Fan it is a source of un-failing interest and enjoyment the year round."

ucated into all the intricacies of the science so that practically everyone can turn to page 10

CASH — MINSTREL — CASH
Highest prices paid for Minstrel Programs, Heralds and Photos. List issued each month.

C. SPENCER CHAMBERS
P.O. Box 722. Syracuse 1, N. Y.

The Name SELLS Prominent In The White Top World For Long Period

By Charlie Duple (Old Circus Trooper)

One of the largest tented amusement institutions touring the United States in the 1880's and 1890's was Sells Brothers Big Show of the World. Using the words of the press agents it was the Colossal, Gigantic, Stupendous, 3-Ring Circus-5-Continent Menagerie and Big Double Museum of the Wonders of Creation, with the grand and glorious street parade worth walking miles to witness. The Sells Brothers show had its beginning in 1872 at Columbus, Ohio, starting as a small overland wagon show and proved a successful venture from the start. The owners were Peter Sells, Lewis Sells, Eph. Sells, and William Allen Sells. After six years of traveling by horse and wagon, showing the cross-roads, towns and hamlets of Ohio and adjoining states the outfit had become prosperous enough to be made into a railroad show and for the season of 1878 it went out on railroad cars and somewhat enlarged and larger towns were on the route. The title now used was Sells Brothers New Railroad Shows and this organization built up gradually to one of the most prominent circuses of that period. During the early 1890's newspaper advertising reads Sells Brothers Big Show of the World. Sailing from San Francisco October 15, 1871, the show was taken to Sydney, Australia, landing there November 12. This was the greatest amount of circus property ever in Australia. Unfortunately a case of glanders was alleged to have been found among

the show's horses and none were allowed to be taken to Sydney. For some months the show was so greatly handicapped by this, although business was big when they finally did get horses, the trip was not a financial success. Sells Brothers brought the show back and opened in San Francisco, June 9, 1892.

Bought Interest

In 1896 the Barnum & Bailey Show, already the owners of the Adam Forepaugh show, bought an interest in Sells Brothers show, and combined the two under the name of Adam Forepaugh & Sells Brothers Great Consolidated Shows.

In January, 1905, James A. Bailey became the sole owner of the Forepaugh-Sells show with a bid of \$150,000, then sold Ringling Brothers a half interest, placing the operation of the show for 1905 and 1906 in their hands. Mr. Bailey died April 11, 1906, and in July, 1907, Ringling Brothers purchased his interest in the show, thus becoming the sole owners operating it until the end of that season, then took it off the road. Ringling Brothers put the show on the road again for 1910 and 1911 then it was retired for good at the winter quarters at Baraboo, Wis., thus two of the most famous names in circus history were discarded. From information I have, the original Sells Brothers had no connection with any of the shows using the

Next Page, Please

CIRCUS — WANT TO BUY — MAGIC

Cash for Circus and Magic programs, posters, heralds, couriers, old prints, books (fact), letters, letter heads, photos, route books, songsters, handbills, lithographs, etc. State all in first letter, giving dates, number, condition, price. Cash paid day items received. America's foremost dealer in Circus material.

C. SPENCER CHAMBERS

P. O. BOX 722

: SYRACUSE 1

: NEW YORK

name Sells, after the Forepaugh Sells show.

Played Middle West

The seasons of 1896 and 1897 there was a small circus traveling by rail which toured the middle west and the south using the title Sells & Rentfrew and if I am not mistaken, the headquarters were Chattanooga, Tenn. The Sells & Gray New United Shows was a new show starting from Elwood, Ind., early in May 1900. This was a classy 15-car circus and the writer passed heralds for the shows appearance at my home town, Jeffersonville, Indiana. The date of exhibition there was May 14, 1900. I saw the parade and night performance and in later years, while with various circuses, I met a few troupers that were with Sells & Gray Show. The name was changed to Sells & Downs Shows for 1903, 1904 and 1905, (Martin Downs, owner). The show enjoyed prosperity the six years it toured the country and for the season 1906 also 1907, 1908 and 1909, the show was on the road as Cole Bros. World-Toured Shows (Martin Downs, owner). The property was sold at auction in January, 1910, by Fiss, Doerr & Carroll, New York horse dealers.

The Otto Floto Show first took the road in 1902 and was backed by H. H. Tammen and F. G. Bonfils wealthy newspaper men of Denver, Colo., and owners of the Denver Post. This was a railroad show and toured the Northwestern states, and proved a success from the start. For 1906 this show became a regular circus and was enlarged to quite a big show, 30 cars, using for the first time the name Sells-Floto Circus. Its territory was the Western states and this show presented the finest features under the white tops that could be obtained. The Sells-Floto name became a household word in the amusement world. For about six years this show never came west of the Mississippi river. The season 1913 the show came in new territory east and success continued. This was one of the most prominent white top organizations of the past forty years. During its career it had exhibited in all sections of the United States and Canada. The writer was with same season 1918 and 1920. In



Bette Leonard

TO ALL MEMBERS OF THE CIRCUS FANS ASSOCIATION

In behalf of the members of the Circus Historical Society, I wish to extend our Best Wishes for a successful meeting during your Convention at Dayton, Ohio, and I also wish to extend to all CFA members an invitation to attend the CHS Convention wherever it is held. Dates to be announced the last of April.

BETTE LEONARD
Pres. of CHS

December, 1920, the Sells-Floto Circus was sold to Mugivan and Bowers who also owned the John Robinson circus and the Hagenbeck-Wallace circus. The American Circus Corporation was then formed. These shows along with the Sparks Circus, and the Al. G. Barnes Circus, passed into the hands of John Ringling in September, 1929, when he bought out the American Circus Corporation. One by one these shows were retired for good, the final year of Sells-Floto Show being 1932. At the close of that season the equipment was sent to the Peru, Ind., winter quar- turn to page 10



Geo. Evans, Pres., L. E. Brown, V.P., C. J. Tripp, Treas

D. W. Denton, Secy., Lancaster, Ohio

DIRECTORS: A. O. Brown, Chas. McClintoch,
Karl L. Denton, Elmer Jackson, Perrin Hazelton,
J. Lester Haberkorn, Oak Shannon, Chas. Armbruster

By D. W. Denton, Sec'y

Since adopting Hobby-Swapper as our official Burnt Cork organ of publicity, starting with the January, 1947, issue, the membership of our Minstrel organization has been steadily on the increase. Starting more or less as an amateur's reunion the idea has caught on to such an extent that all ex-pro Minstrel Mokes who have heard, for the first time, about the existence of such an organization for Minstrel people, are writing in favorable comments daily.

To quote one Ex-pro Mr. Eddie Condon of Pomeroy, Ohio: "I think the B. C. organization is a great movement. Those of us who really love Minstrelsy have bemoaned its seeming death for a long time but have done nothing about it, and I didn't know until now, that such an organization as yours, had ever been thought of. But I am darned glad it has been and will do anything within my power to help it grow."

Such letters as these are most gratifying to our National Executive Board and with the help of such enthusiastic and capable men as Mr. Condon, we can't lose.

Each week, some reader sends in a name or two of someone in their town who still is or has been, a red hot Minstrel performer or fan.

As time permits, I try to send replies to all of these queries, and can promise that eventually, we'll get around to all of them.

Keep 'em coming fellows and we'll really put on a "big one" in the home town of the Burnt Corkers Club, come next September.

In the meantime, get those fifty cent pieces to the publisher of this

grand little magazine for your subscription.

He is doing a grand job for us and will continue to stay in there a-pitchin' as long as we do our part.

BRINLEY MINIATURE CIRCUS ON DISPLAY AT CONVENTION

The famous miniature 5-ring circus, carved and owned by William R. Brinley of Meridan, Conn., will be on display at the Rike-Kumler store in Dayton, Ohio, during the CFA convention. The circus is complete from the blacksmith shop to the "Big Top" and occupies a space about 20x50 feet. Tents are lighted with a generator creating 12 volts.

All features omitted this month will appear in the June issue.

NEXT MONTH—Don't miss article on Circusiana by Katherine J. Justh Baross.

Business Directory

Rate—three lines for 6 months, no change in copy, \$3.00; or 12 months for \$5.00.

ANTIQUES, CHINA AND GLASS-ware. Emma Huffman, South Main St., Camden, Ohio, on Federal Route 127. 6

GLASS, CHINA, BUTTONS, CURrier & Ives, Historical Items. Almost everything except furniture. Mrs. Lou R. Pierce, Second St., one street off U. S. 127, Camden, Ohio. 6t3

NEW & USED BOOKS, BACK CO-pies magazines. Pat's Trading Post, 105 W. Main, Johnson City, Tenn.

CIGAR BANDS FOR COLLEC-tors. 40c for 25 or \$1 for 75c. Hob-by Sales Co., Box 88, Red Lion, Pa.

ANTIQUES—GENERAL LINE FUR-niture, china, glass. U. S.-27, be-tween Millville-Oxford. Mr. and Mrs. Harold Sapp.

ANTIQUES—WHEN IN CAMDEN, stop at Hattie Hibbins, S. Main St., Camden, Ohio. x6

Chang & Eng

By Joseph L. Tracy

To begin with, Chang & Eng, later known as Chang-Eng Bunker (after a New York lady who treated them kindly), were born in 1811 in a tiny fishing village on the Mekong River not far from Bangkok, Siam. Their father was Chinese and their mother half Chinese, which made them only one-quarter Siamese—or, to be quizzical, one-eighth Siamese apiece.

They grew to the height of five feet one inch for Chang and five feet two inches for Eng (Chang



Chang & Eng

wore special lifts in his shoes so his twin brother wouldn't top him) and they made themselves useful raising ducks and peddling eggs, and everyone remarked how smart they were at driving bargains, for they both talked together, each finishing the other's sentence, and the ordinary haggler was no match for them.

One day, when the Twins were 18 years old, a Yankee skipper dropped anchor in the harbor and accidentally met the Twins. He immediately shanghaied them and brought them to Boston. They created a sensation, not only around Boston but in Europe

where their protector next journeyed with them. Toured 2500 miles in the British Isles alone, exhibiting the twins to 300,000 Britishers. Even the august Royal College of Surgeons invited the twins to tea, and after discreetly examining them pronounced them "an extraordinary *Lusus Naturae*."

They were all of that. Joined as they were, "they could run and swim, take walks of eight and ten miles, play battledore and shut tlecock, also went hunting." They could walk only side by side and slept face to face changing positions by the simple expedient of rolling over, which they learned to do automatically without awakening each other. They were normal in every way, except for a small, flexible band three and a half inches long and some eight inches in circumference connecting them from the extremity of the breast bone of each and extending downward to the abdomen.

There was a difference of opinion among medical experts of the time as to what went on inside this connecting band and they did find out at the postmortem which was a world event. But all agreed that surgical divorce would have proved fatal. A pin prick in the exact center of the band was felt by both. As children the Twins had measles and smallpox at the same time, but as adults one Twin was a complete souse while the other was a teetotaler.

They were with the Barnum Museum for five years at the corner of Anne street and Broadway (The American Museum). They accumulated an estate of \$60,000. April 1, 1843, in Wilkes county, North Carolina, Chang married Adelaide Yeats and Eng married her sister, Sarah Ann, but they did not live together happily. The sisters did not get along and the brothers did not like their sisters-in-law. They built separate houses three miles apart near Mount Airy, North Carolina, and lived three days at a time in each house.

They were married 30 years and had between them 22 children, all bright. Eng was the champ, with seven boys and five girls. Chang had seven girls and three boys,

. . . turn to page 10

C. SPENCER CHAMBERS BUYS PITZER COLLECTION

C. Spencer Chambers of Syracuse, N. Y., has just purchased the Pitzer collection of circusiana. This is the sixth large collection he has acquired within a year.

The Pitzer lot differs from the Stensvad collection in that it is rich in old heralds while the latter was stronger in route books. The breaking up of these many collections is not to be regretted as the individual items are falling into good collector's hands who really appreciate circusiana rarities.

Gun Gossip

By Edward L. Beard
1811 Dale Road,
Cincinnati 29, Ohio



The above photo pictures a little known model of the Colt .45 Single Action. At first glance most of you gun collectors will think it's just an ordinary single action with a cut down barrel. Now take a second look. The barrel is exactly 3" long and is original throughout. It is unusual for the simple reason that the frame was made without recess for rod ejector. In other words it was made without the usual shell ejector push rod. This gun is known officially as the New Model Single Action Army pocket model. They were available only on special order and very few made which accounts for their rarity. It evidently was not a satisfactory pocket weapon for due to the short barrel on such a heavy frame and action it seems awkward and unwieldy. This particular specimen is numbered 328898 which indicates that it was numbered along with the ordinary single actions. Outside of a few "shopworn" mars in the finish, this specimen is in fine condition.

This Colt is rare and doesn't show up in some of the larger well known collections. I have seen only two others like it in my 18 years of "gunning." The piece pictured turned up as a sleeper—passing through a well known dealer's hands to a collector friend of mine. I bought it for just what many of you would think—a nice unusual single action. But alas and alack, I let it go and it now reposes in the collection of Charles W. Fritz, Chief of Police, Norwood, Ohio. It hangs in the same cabinet with a Walker and four Dragons, so I know it is in "fittin'" company.

The Ohio Gun Collectors Association sponsored another show—this time in my home town, at the Netherland Plaza Hotel, March 15th and 16th. Approximately 100 exhibitors attended the two-day meet and a fine show was enjoyed by all. The next show is to be held at Steubenville, Ohio, around the end of May. Definite dates will be made known later. Plan to attend. You will enjoy the fine spirit of sportsmen and gentlemen getting together with their mutual love of gun lore.

As many of you know, our love of firearms has again been threatened by drastic proposed gun legislation, namely, the Wiley and Carson Bills. However, I'm happy to report that due to the deluge of telegrams and letters sent in by sportsmen and gun collectors all over the nation to their representatives in Washington, in protest, has been largely responsible for the death of both bills. But this doesn't mean that some mis-informed legislator won't try again. Keep on your toes and keep right on protesting. You and I and the whole world knows that it is the American's heritage and right to possess firearms. Let us keep and protect that right. Europeans learned to their sorrow what it was to be disarmed through just such gun laws. Why, some of our representatives in Washington feel that gun legislation will curb crime, is beyond me. I would certainly appreciate hearing comments from anyone along this subject.

Remember friends, if you have a question let me hear from you. Please send stamped envelope.

CIRCUS PHOTOGRAPHS

from page 3

everyone can now do a pretty fair job with a camera. Very few persons have consistently made a hobby of taking circus pictures for the past 25 or 30 years as has the writer whose own personal photographs number in the thousands.

The hobby of circus photography is comparatively recent and numbers many thousands of "addicts" both in the field of snapshots and motion pictures. The hobbyist's interest and enthusiasm have proven infectious and has been a decided stimulus in making the public more "circus minded" than they would be ordinarily.

Camera fans are welcome on practically every circus lot as long as they act with propriety and proper decorum, stay out of the way, respect the circus folks privacy and refrain from taking pictures that might have injurious effects to the circus.

For brilliant color and the unusual, the Circus is unsurpassed as a source for photographic subjects. Circus pictures as a class will attract more attention and stimulate more interest than any other pictures and their value in creating interest in the Circus is inestimable.

Circus photographs have been the best source of information for the thousands of persons building model and miniature circus equipment, most of whom would be at a complete loss without the pictures to serve as a guide. One good picture tells more than one thousand words.

Public acceptance of circus pictures in various national advertising displays attests to the public's interest in the American Circus.

THE NAME SELLS

from page 5

ters and that famous circus name Sells, passed completely from the picture.

From 1872 to 1932, a period of sixty years, the reader will note the Sells name was outstanding in circus annals. Sells Brothers, Forepaugh-Sells, Sells & Rentfrew, Sells & Gray, Sells & Downs, and Sells-Floto. Great names in the white top world that have gone but are not forgotten.

A CHRONOLOGICAL HISTORY OF THE MOVIES

By Hugo Zeiter
of Danville, Ill.

PART II

1900

Melies, Frenchman, producing super one reelers.

1902

First Nickelodeons opened.

Charles Urban marked a new departure in film entertainment by starting two hour matinees and including scientific, educational and geographical films.

In England, films were largely confined to sideshows at Fairs. Electric theatres became popular all over England. The more expensive seats were those nearest the screen. Audiences sat on both sides of the dampened transparent screen.

(Continued next month)

PERSONALS

We had as recent visitors, L. H. Lloyd and Clarke K. Lloyd of Oxford, Ohio. The former is a noted stamp collector and the latter has a fine Currier & Ives collection as mentioned in another issue of this publication.

Have you sent us a Post Card listing your Hobby? We need this information. Please use Post Card . . . they will fit our files.

June's Antique Shop, Salina, Kansas, writes that they are still receiving results from their Feb. adv. New adv. in this issue.

CHANG & ENG.

from page 8

and they too were normal except that one boy and girl were deaf mutes. The Civil War came and they came to New York and were exhibited at Wood's Museum and then went back to spend the rest of their lives on their farms. On January 23, 1874, 63 years old, Chang died and Eng died from fright two hours after. Chang died from a cerebral clot. To separate them in life would have been fatal as the autopsy proved at the College of Physicians in the city of Philadelphia, Pa. The word Siamese carried on with all other Twins born together until this day.

The Amenities of Collecting Circusiana

By Burt L. Wilson

Not all Circus Fans are collectors, but it is a cinch that all collectors are Circus Fans. In the fifteen pleasant years that I have been active in this field I have found that all collectors have an inherent love of the circus, or some phase of it. It has been said that Circus Fans are folks, who should have "joined out" in their earlier days, but for some reason did not, and for that reason are destined to go down life's pathways forever after with the nostalgic aroma of the circus in their nostrils.

Unlike collecting stamps, coins and first editions, the hope for future monetary value in this branch of collecting is small and therefore the average collector is in there pitching strictly from interest in his subject. There have been a few gentlemen of profit around in the past few years but they quickly evaporate into thin air when they do not get the quick turnover and large profits which they must have to carry on.

Probably the greatest pleasure I have ever received from collecting circus material has been the many hundreds of fine people I have met who in one way or the other have been connected with the circus. Many, many are now fast friends and much of my success in collecting I could never have attained without their aid. This alone has made the game worthwhile.

A number of the earlier collectors were always at a loss as to what to do with their collection when it became too big to handle in the home. I wish to point out now a recent development which if followed through should solve the problem for a great many collectors.

That is the anticipated Circus Museum which the state of Florida hopes to have at Sarasota. Here is a real idea to perpetuate the Circus and if conducted properly should prove a great source of pleasure not only to the collector but to the average knowledgeable American as well. Because friends, here is one time the museum is going to have to come to the collector, whether they know

it at this time or not. Most of the important material, route books, lithos, programs, etc. in this country is now in the hands of the collector outside of course that which is already in the different libraries and museums of the United States.

For my part I never regret for one minute the time and money I have put into this interesting vocation. For besides material I have collected records of performance which are invaluable to me and to future circus historians. Also collecting circus slang in itself is a branch which is not often thought of. Another out of the way subject I have gotten into in late years is the collection of "Monikers" or names. Such as "Big Top Slim," "Center Pole Whitey," "Short Side Joe," etc., etc. The further one gets into this fascinating business the further he will go automatically. Probably why circus collectors are the salt of the earth is that very few think of the cash value of their accumulation. I have seen many young fellows with a few programs who were just as happy as the older collector with a hundred route books. And that after all is the very essence of collecting.

"Best Wishes" to

CFA

SHANK PHOTOS

Clarence R. Shank
CFA No. 1672

Camden, Ohio