



CIRCUS

MEMORABILIA AUCTION

AUGUST 7TH, 2024.





Freedom Auction Company Presents:

CIRCUS HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Memorabilia Auction Catalog

Wednesday, August 7th
Atlanta, Georgia

Together with:

THE WORLD'S GREATEST TENTMAKER

The William Hobson Story
By Brian Hollifield

Inquiries to:
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www.circusauctions.com
941.725.2166





1



1A

LOT 1. RINGLING BROS. WORLD'S GREATEST SHOWS POSTER

RARE - RINGLING BROS. PROPRIETORS & MANAGERS OF THE WORLD'S GREATEST SHOWS, FOUNDERS OF THE NEW SCHOOL OF AMERICAN SHOWMEN. OLD LINEN BACKING, GROMMETS AT UPPER CORNERS, CRUDE INFILL IN LEFT MARGIN, CLOSED TEARS. A VERY SCARCE EXAMPLE. 28.25"x41.5". 7,000-10,000

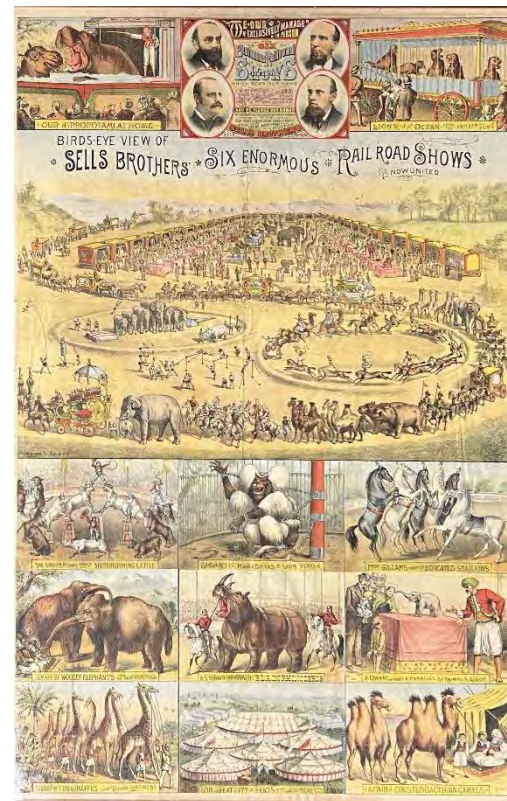
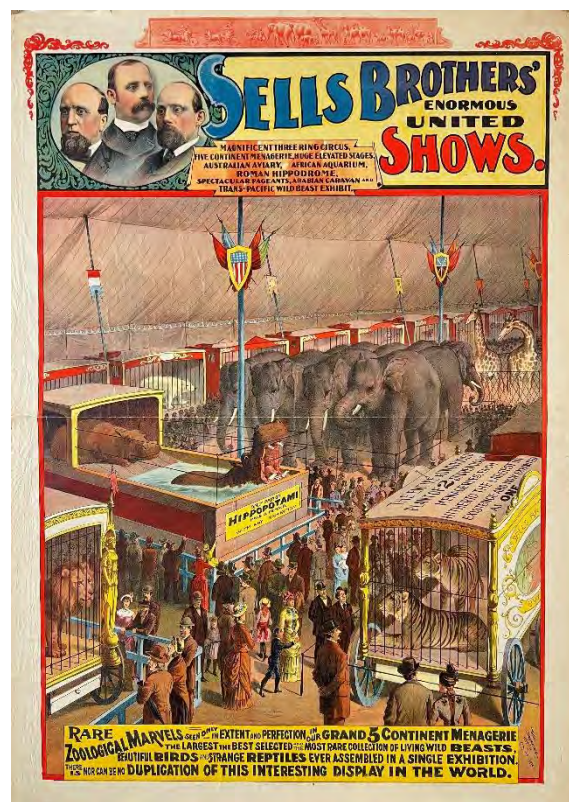
LOT 1A. RINGLING BROS. WORLD'S GREATEST SHOWS POSTER

RINGLING BROS. WORLD'S GREATEST SHOWS - THE WORLD'S CHAMPION BAREBACK SOMERSAULT ARTISTS, THE CHOSEN FAVORITES OF EUROPE AND AMERICA. ONE SHEET, COURIER LITHO CO., BUFFALO, N.Y., 1895. OLD LINEN BACKING, GROMMETS AT UPPER CORNERS, LIGHT WEAR AT MARGINS. 28.5"x42". 2,000-4,000

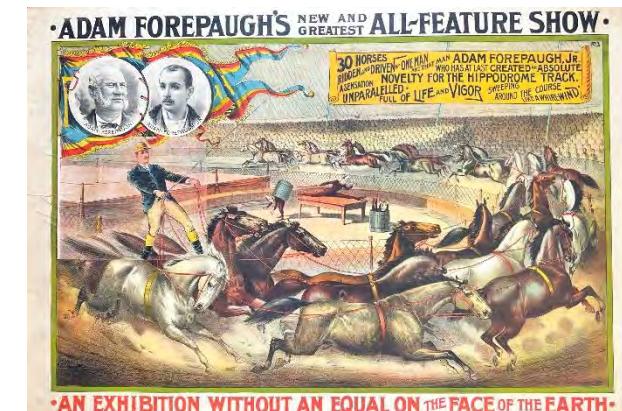
LOT 2. SELLS BROTHERS ENORMOUS UNITED SHOWS POSTER

SELLS BROTHERS CIRCUS - ENORMOUS UNITED SHOWS. MAGNIFICENT THREE RING CIRCUS, FIVE CONTINENT MENAGERIE, HUGE ELEVATED STAGES, AUSTRALIAN AVIARY, AFRICAN AQUARIUM, ROMAN HIPPODROME, SPECTACULAR PAGEANTS, ARABIAN CARAVAN AND TRANS-PACIFIC WILD BEAST EXHIBIT. A SPECTACULAR LOOK INSIDE THE MENAGERIE. ONE SHEET, STROBRIDGE LITHO, 1890'S. CHARTEX, EDGE WEAR, FOLDS, BRILLIANT COLORS. 30"x40". 2,000-3,000

2



2A



2B

LOT 2A. SELLS BROTHERS ENORMOUS RAILROAD SHOWS POSTER

RARE - SELLS BROTHERS CIRCUS - ENORMOUS RAILROAD SHOWS - NOW UNITED. HALF SHEET, STROBRIDGE LITHO, C.1880'S. BIRDS-EYE VIEW OF SELLS BROTHERS SIX ENORMOUS RAILROAD SHOWS. HAS NOT BEEN EXAMINED OUTSIDE OF FRAME. RESTORED MARGINS, WRINKLING, FOXING AND SOME OVERLAPPING OF PIECES/SECTIONS. 21.5"x32". 15,000-25,000

LOT 2B. ADAM FOREPAUGH'S NEW AND GREATEST ALL-FEATURE SHOW

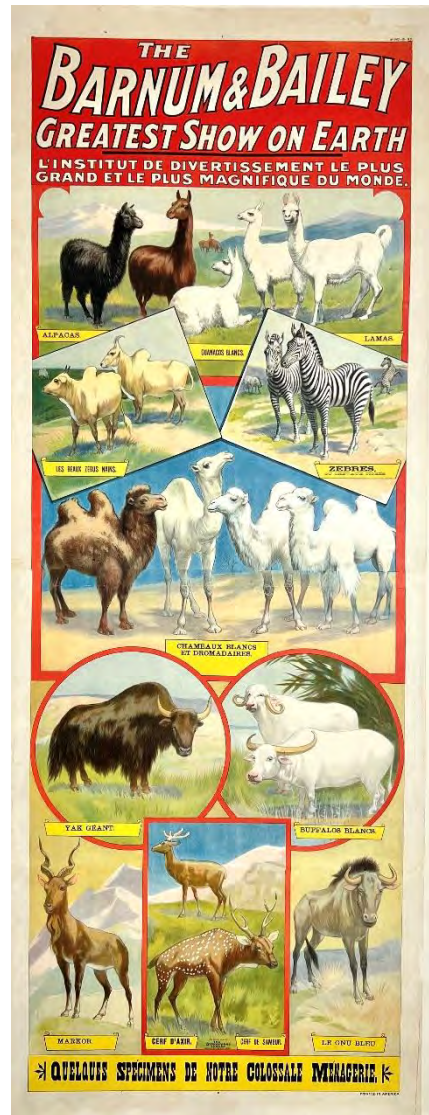
ADAM FOREPAUGH'S NEW AND GREATEST ALL-FEATURE SHOW POSTER. AN EXHIBITION WITHOUT AN EQUAL ON THE FACE OF THE EARTH. ONE SHEET, CENTRAL LITHO, NEW N.Y., C.1888. OLD LINEN BACKING, SMALL AREA OF OBVERSE TAPE, PASTE OVER RIDER. 28.25"x42.25". 2,000-3,000



2C

LOT 2C. ADAM FOREPAUGH'S NEW AND GREATEST ALL-FEATURE SHOW

THE GREAT 4-PAW SHOW FEATURING SIX ANIMAL ACT VIGNETTES. ENTIRELY NEW AND STARTLING INNOVATIONS IN ANIMAL TRAINING. ONE SHEET, STROBRIDGE LITHO, C.1880'S. OLD LINEN BACKING, WEAR AT MARGINS, FOUR SMALL AREAS OF TAPE ON OBVERSE MARGINS. 30"x40". 2,000-3,000



3



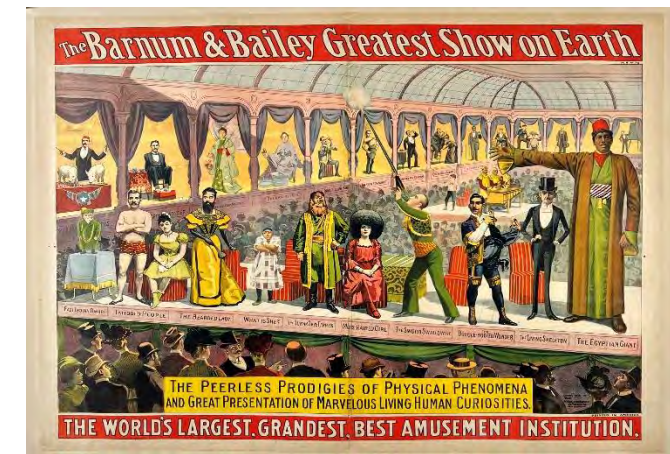
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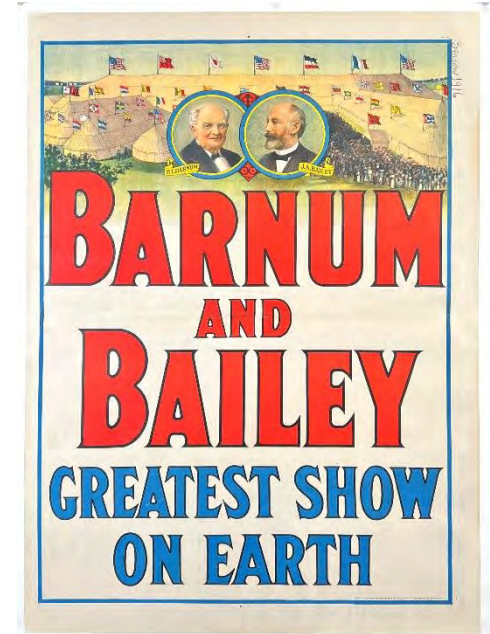
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4A



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5A

LOT 2D. HAGENBECK'S TRAINED ANIMALS POSTER

HAGENBECK'S TRAINED ANIMALS - MIDWAY PLAISANCE - WORLD'S FAIR. MUSEUM AND MENAGERIE. CHICAGO WORLD'S FAIR, 1893. HALF SHEET, SHOBER AND CARQUEVILLE, CHICAGO, 1961. PROFESSIONALLY CONSERVED ON LINEN. 23.5"X31.25". 1,000-2,000

LOT 3. BARNUM AND BAILEY CIRCUS POSTER

BARNUM & BAILEY - GREATEST SHOW ON EARTH, FRENCH. DISPLAY OF ANIMAL SPECIES. PROFESSIONALLY CONSERVED, LINEN BACKED. THREE SHEET, STROBRIDGE LITHO, 1901. 30.5"X78.5". 600-900

LOT 4. P.T. BARNUMS NEW AND GREATEST SHOW ON EARTH

RARE - P.T. BARNUM'S NEW AND GREATEST SHOW ON EARTH, COMING ON FOUR SPECIAL TRAINS, 1876. HAND-TINTED POSTER, ACQUIRED FROM DECENDENTS OF THE BARNUM ESTATE. H.A. THOMAS & CO. LITH., NEW YORK, 1876. UNMOUNTED. SCATTERED MARGINAL FOXING, CLOSED EDGE TEARS, SCATTERED STAINING. 21.5"X27". 20,000-30,000

LOT 4A. BARNUM AND BAILEY GREATEST SHOW ON EARTH POSTER

BARNUM & BAILEY GREATEST SHOW ON EARTH, THE WHOLE FAMILY AT THE CIRCUS AND THIS IS WHAT THEY SAW. DEPICTION OF AWESTRUCK PATRONS OVERLOOKING A 5 RING DISPLAY. ONE SHEET, RUSSELL-MORGAN PRINT - CINCINNATI & NEW YORK, 1907. OLD LINEN BACKING, GROMMETT EVIDENCE AT UPPER CORNERS, MINOR AREAS OF LOSS, CORNER CREASE. 27"X 39.75". 2,000-3,000

LOT 5. BARNUM AND BAILEY CIRCUS POSTER

BARNUM & BAILEY - GREATEST SHOW ON EARTH - THE PEERLESS PRODIGES OF PHYSICAL PHENOMENA AND GREAT PRESENTATION OF MARVELOUS LIVING HUMAN CURIOSITIES. CIRCUS, ODDITY AND MAGIC DISPLAY INSIDE THE SIDESHOW VENUE WITH PERFORMERS INCLUDING: EAST INDIAN DWARF, TATTOOED PEOPLE, THE BEARDED LADY, WHAT IS SHE, THE HUMAN SKYE TERRIER, MOSS HAURED GIRL, SWORD SWALLOWER, DOUBLE BODIED WONDER, LIVING SKELETON, EGYPTIAN GIANT, JAPANESE MAGICIAN, ARMLESS WONDER, ARMLESS GIRL, INDIAN RUBBER MAN, GREAT EXPANSIONIST, HUMAN PIN CUSHION, GEORGIA MAGNET, GLASS EATER AND OTHERS. RARE TO FIND! ONE SHEET, STROBRIDGE LITHO, 1899. PROFESSIONALLY CONSERVED, LINEN BACKED, TOUCH UP AT CENTER FOLD. 32"X41". 15,000-25,000

LOT 5A. BARNUM AND BAILEY CIRCUS POSTER

BARNUM AND BAILEY - GREATEST SHOW ON EARTH. P.T. BARNUM AND J.A. BAILEY OWNER PORTRAITS WITH TENTS IN THE BACKGROUND WITH TITLE. ONE SHEET, STROBRIDGE LITHO, 1916. PROFESSIONALLY CONSERVED ON LINEN. 31"X42". 600-900



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LOT 6. BARNUM AND BAILEY CIRCUS POSTER

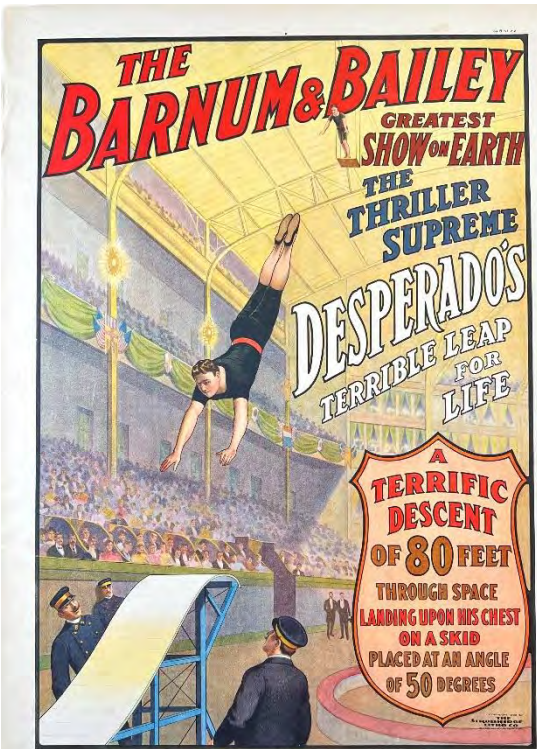
BARNUM & BAILEY - GREATEST SHOW ON EARTH - ATTRACTION EXTRAORDINARY. A CONGRESS OF JAPAN'S FAMOUS STRONG MEN, GLADIATORS, SWORDSMEN, WRESTLERS, JIU-JITSU AND ATHLETIC CHAMPIONS. ONE SHEET, STROBRIDGE LITHO, 1912. PROFESSIONALLY CONSERVED, OLD LINEN BACKING. 30"X40". 800-1,200

LOT 7. BARNUM AND BAILEY CIRCUS POSTER

BARNUM & BAILEY - GREATEST SHOW ON EARTH - FRENCH, TRAPEZE ACTS. ONE SHEET, STROBRIDGE LITHO, 1900. OLD LINEN BACKING. 30"X40". 600-900

LOT 7A. BARNUM AND BAILEY CIRCUS POSTER

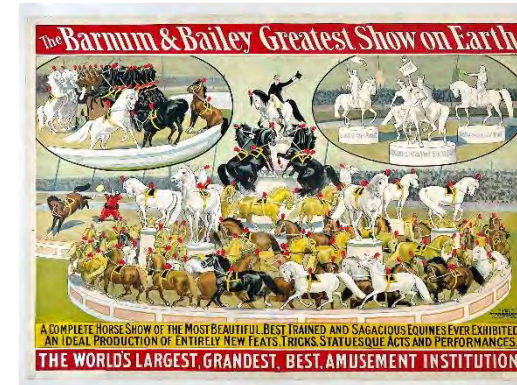
BARNUM & BAILEY GREATEST SHOW ON EARTH - THE THRILLER SUPREME - DESPERADO'S TERRIBLE LEAP FOR LIFE, A TERRIFIC DESCENT OF 80 FEET THROUGH SPACE, LANDING UPON HIS CHEST ON A SKID PLACED AT AN ANGLE OF 50 DEGREES. ONE SHEET, STROBRIDGE LITHO, 1903. PROFESSIONALLY CONSERVED ON LINEN. 31.5"X41.5". 800-1,200



7A



7



8

LOT 8. BARNUM AND BAILEY CIRCUS POSTER

BARNUM & BAILEY - GREATEST SHOW ON EARTH - A COMPLETE HORSE SHOW OF THE MOST BEAUTIFUL, BEST TRAINED AND SAGACIOUS EQUINES EVER EXHIBITED. AN IDEAL PRODUCTION OF ENTIRELY NEW FEATS, TRICKS, STATUESQUE ACTS AND PERFORMANCES. ONE SHEET, STROBRIDGE LITHO, 1903. PROFESSIONALLY CONSERVED WITH SCATTERED TOUCH UP, LINEN BACKED. 32"X41". 800-1,200



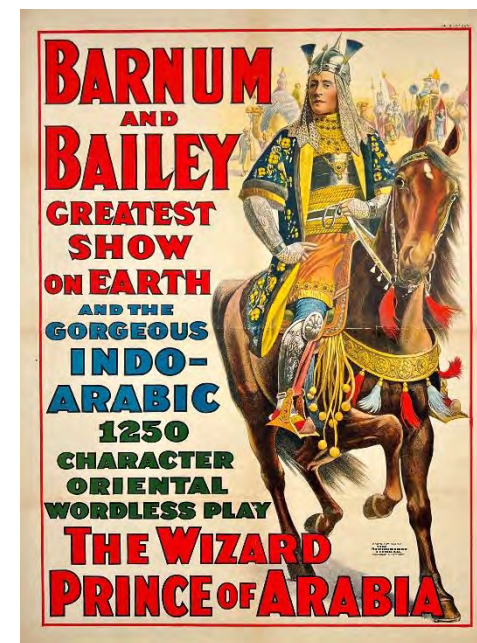
9

LOT 9. BARNUM AND BAILEY CIRCUS POSTER

BARNUM & BAILEY - IMRE KIRALFY'S COLUMBUS AND THE DISCOVERY OF AMERICA SPEC. ONE SHEET, STROBRIDGE LITHO, 1891. CHARTEX, FOLDS AS ISSUED. 30"X40". 600-900

LOT 10. BARNUM AND BAILEY CIRCUS POSTER

BARNUM & BAILEY GREATEST SHOW ON EARTH AND THE GORGEOUS INDO-ARABIC 1250 CHARACTER ORIENTAL WORDLESS PLAY, THE WIZARD PRINCE OF ARABIA. ONE SHEET, STROBRIDGE LITHO, 1914. CHARTEX, CENTRAL FOLD. 30"X40". 800-1,200



10

LOT 11. BARNUM AND BAILEY CIRCUS POSTER

BARNUM & BAILEY POSTER IN GERMAN FEATURING THE WORLD'S GREATEST RIDERS. ONE SHEET, STROBRIDGE LITHO, 1900. CHARTEX. BRILLIANT COLORS, EXCELLENT. 30"X38.5". 600-900

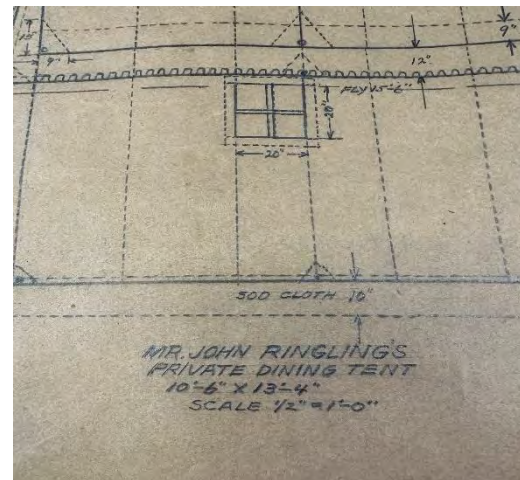


11

**LOT 12
THE HOBSON SCROLL**

**WILLIAM HOBSON
AMERICAN, 1884-1939**

**GRAPHITE ON BUTCHER PAPER
3' X 100'**



THE HOBSON SCROLL IS AN IMPORTANT, MONUMENTAL HAND-DRAWN COMPOSITION COMPLETED BY WILLIAM HOBSON, RINGLING BROS. BARNUM BAILEY CIRCUS TENTMAKER, 1927-1939. THE DRAWING WAS COMPLETED C.1928 IN AN EFFORT TO DETAIL THE NEEDS OF THE SHOW.

THE SCROLL DETAILS ALL THIRTY-SEVEN CANVAS STRUCTURES ON THE RINGLING SHOW. MOVING LEFT-TO-RIGHT, THE DRAWING BEGINS WITH THE SIX POLE BIG TOP AND ENDS WITH JOHN RINGLING'S PRIVATE TENT. OTHER STRUCTURES INCLUDE THE MENAGERIE, SIDE SHOW, STABLE, DINING AND EVEN LILLIAN LEITZEL'S TENT. THE BEAUTIFULLY DRAWN ARTIFACT WAS FOLKLORE UNTIL RECENTLY DISCOVERED IN THE HOBSON COLLECTION.

THE 1936 RBBB PROGRAM DESCRIBES THE DRAWING BEING STORED IN A SPECIALLY DESIGNED STEEL TUBE. HOBSON RECALLED ONLY REMOVING IT FROM THE TUBE A FEW TIMES FOR REFERENCE AND IT HAS ONLY RECENTLY BEEN REMOVED FOR INSPECTION FOR THE FIRST TIME IN NEARLY 85 YEARS.

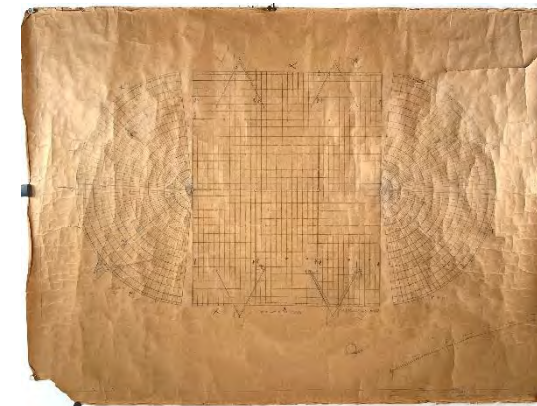
THE SCROLL IS IN EXCELLENT CONDITION. METAL STORAGE TUBE IS INCLUDED. THIS IS A RARE, ONE-OF-A-KIND, HISTORICAL CIRCUS ARTIFACT THAT WILL LIKELY NEVER COME TO MARKET AGAIN. WILLIAM HOBSON COLLECTION. 30,000-60,000



14

LOT 13. WILLIAM HOBSON CIRCUS TENT DRAWING

THIS APPEARS TO BE A FRAGMENT FROM THE ORIGINAL HOBSON SCROLL. DRAWING IN GRAPHITE ON BUTCHER PAPER, FOUR-POLE BIG TOP. HAND-DRAWN BY WILLIAM HOBSON. EDGE WEAR, TEAR. 36"X48". 300-600



13

LOT 14. WILLIAM HOBSON CIRCUS WORKING PLANS

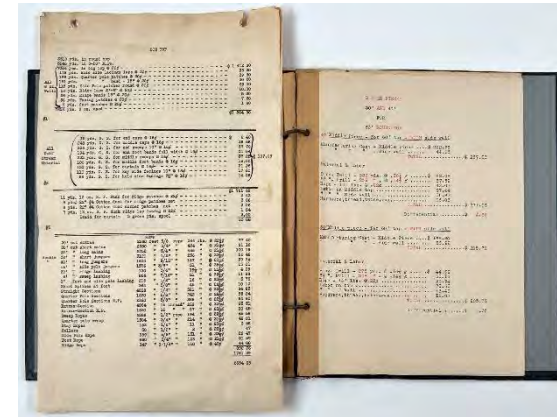
WILLIAM HOBSON COLLECTION. HOBSON WAS CHIEF TENTMAKER FOR RINGLING BROS. AND BARNUM & BAILEY CIRCUS AND AFFILIATED SHOWS FROM 1927 UNTIL 1939. INCLUDED IN THIS LOT IS A VERY SPECIAL COLLECTION OF FOUR MEMORANDUM BOOKS, METICULOUSLY MAINTAINED BY HOBSON, KNOWN AS THE WORLD'S GREATEST TENTMAKER. RINGLING BROS. BARNUM BAILEY CIRCUS 1927 INDEX OF TENTS. HOBSON WAS HIRED BY JOHN RINGLING IN 1927 AND WITH THIS INDEX OF TENTS, HOBSON HAND-SKETCHED EVERY CANVAS TOP ON THE SHOW, PROVIDING MEASUREMENTS AND SCHEMATICS. SIMULTANEOUSLY, HOBSON BEGAN TO NOTATE DAILY WORK PROGRESS IN A COMPOSITION BOOK TITLED, "1928 OUTFIT - RINGLING BROS.". THE 1928 OUTFIT BOOK DETAILS SPECIFICATIONS, SUPPLIES AND DAILY WORK PROGRESS FROM AS EARLY AS 1929 TO 1939. 1929 NATIONAL ORDER BOOKS CONTAINS SKETCHES OF THE AMERICAN CIRCUS CORPORATION SHOW TENTS INCLUDING HAGENBECK WALLACE, JOHN ROBINSON, SELLS-FLOTO AND AL G. BARNES. THIS GROUPING IS A RARE LOOK BEHIND THE CURTAIN AT WHAT IT TOOK TO CONSTRUCT AND MAINTAIN THE GREATEAST SHOW ON EARTH CANVAS STRUCTURES. 3,000-6,000



15

LOT 15. WILLIAM HOBSON CIRCUS MEMORABILIA

HOBSON COLLECTION OF MEMENTOS INCLUDING: LAYOUT MARKERS, LEATHER TOOL POUCHES, BINDING TAPE, BLACK BOOKS, WM. HOBSON AND CO. CIRCUS TENT MAIL ORDER BROCHURES/LETTERHEAD, HOBSON'S ORIGINAL DRAFTSMAN BOOK, HOBSON BUSINESS CARD, 1939 NEW DESIGN TENT PHOTOGRAPHS, PHOTOGRAPH OF HOBSON AND WIFE, LETTER TO FIANCE, HOBSON & MEYER LETTERHEAD, JOHN SCHERZ & SON POSTCARD, PLYMOUTH CORDAGE COMPANY ADVERTISEMENT WITH HOBSON ENDORSEMENT, HOBSON'S ALBANY TENT & AWNING COMPANY LETTERHEAD, 1938 AMERICAN FEDERATION OF ACTORS FOR EMPLOYEES OF RBBB GOOD NEWS LETTER, CIRCUS TENT SHOP CONCEPTUAL DRAWING, 1937 RBBB CANVAS OUTFIT INVENTORY, 1938 SOCIAL SECURITY REPORTING. ADDITIONAL PHOTOGRAPHS INCLUDE EARLY 1900'S CIRCUS TENT PHOTOGRAPH, TENT WORKERS UNION HALL, WILLIAM AND ANNA HONEYMOON PHOTO TAKEN IN FRONT OF A CIRCUS TENT. 500-1,000



17

LOT 17. WM. HOBSON CIRCUS TENT MEMORABILIA
NOTEBOOK CONTAINING COST ANALYSIS AND INVENTORY FOR CONSTRUCTION OF THE RBBB BIG TOP AS COMPILED BY WILLIAM HOBSON, C.1929. 300-600



18

LOT 18. WM. HOBSON CIRCUS TENT MEMORABILIA
SCARCE IMAGES OF THE SARASOTA WINTERQUARTERS SAIL LOFT DURING WILLIAM HOBSON'S TENURE C.1930'S. A PHOTOGRAPHIC HISTORY OF THE SAIL LOFT, WHERE THE GREAT BILLOWY CIRCUS TENTS OF SUMMERTIME WERE CONSTRUCTED. SERIES OF SIX ORIGINAL PHOTOGRAPHS, PRIMARILY 8"X10. 300-600

LOT 19. RBBB CIRCUS TENT FRAGMENTS

4 PIECES FROM THE GOLDEN ERA, C.1930. EACH WITH CONSTRUCTION SKETCHES OF TENT SECTIONS FOR THE SIDESHOW, MENAGERIE, DRESSING, DINING, PAD HORSE TENTS. EACH DRAWING DONE TO VARIOUS SCALE. LARGEST SEGMENT IS 5"X61". 200-400

LOT 20. RINGLING BROS. GOLDEN JUBILEE SCISSORS

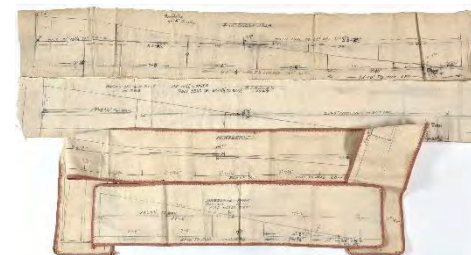
ORIGINAL WISS BRAND #190L SEWING SCISSORS TO COMMEMORATE THE RINGLING BROTHERS' GOLDEN JUBILEE, 1883-1933. WILLIAM HOBSON COLLECTION. HOBSON WAS CHIEF TENTMAKER FOR RINGLING BROS. AND BARNUM & BAILEY CIRCUS AND AFFILIATED SHOWS FROM 1927 UNTIL 1939. 200-300

LOT 16. WILLIAM HOBSON CIRCUS MEMORABILIA

COMPOSITION AND DIARY BOOKLETS COVERING BOTH PERSONAL AND BUSINESS DATA. IMPORTANT FIVE-YEAR DIARY, 1937-9. TENT DRAWINGS AND NOTES, TIME BOOKS, PAYROLL. 1,000-2,000



16

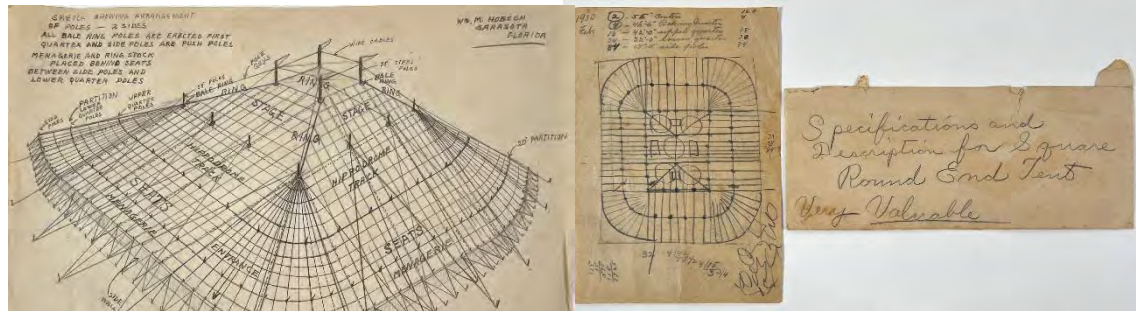


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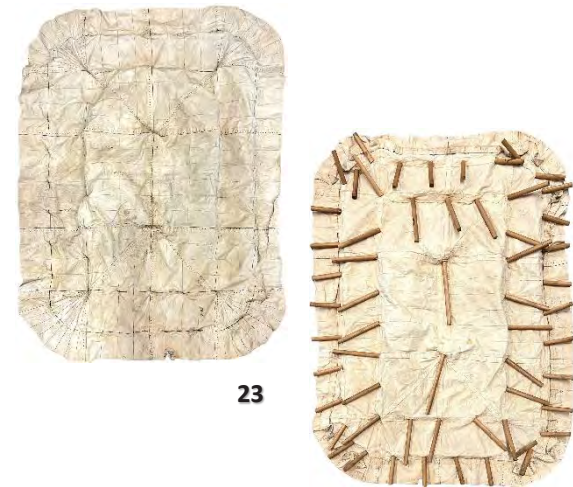
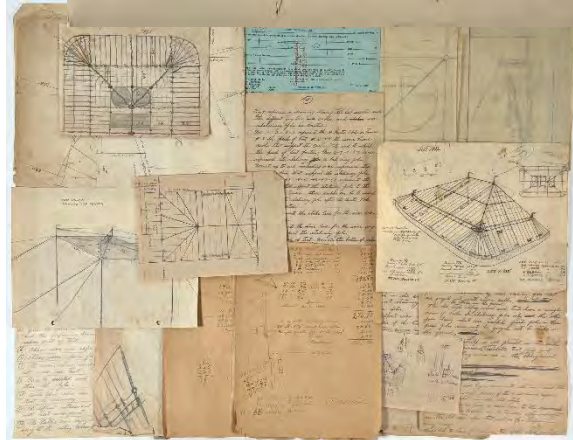
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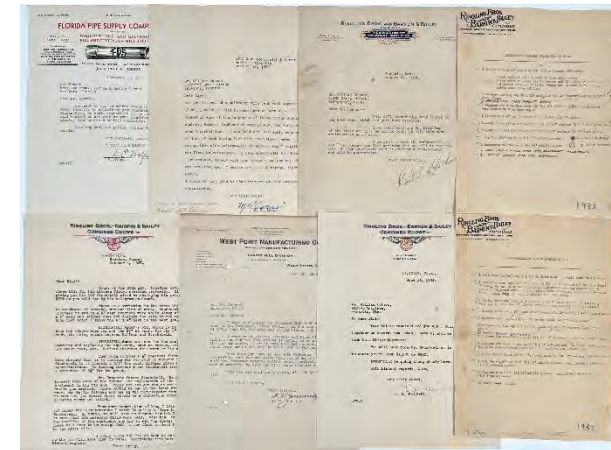
21

LOT 21. WM. HOBSON CIRCUS SQUARE TENT DESIGN
 A PATENT FOLIO CONTAINING THE ORIGINAL DESIGN, SKETCHES AND SCHEMATICS OF WILLIAM HOBSON AND CARL HATHAWAY'S (RBBB MANAGER) SQUARE CIRCUS TENT, C.1933. REVOLUTIONARY IN ITS DESIGN, THE SQUARE TENT CONCEPT DIFFERED FROM TRADITIONAL OBLONG TENTS OF THE DAY AND CONTAINED A CORNER FOUR POLE STRUCTURE WHICH NOT ONLY MADE THE DESIGN STRONGER BUT OFFERED UNOBSTRUCTED PERFORMANCE VIEWS. DESCRIBED AS "VERY VALUABLE", AN ENVELOPE CONTAINS THE ORIGINAL CONCEPTUAL DRAWING. INCLUDED IS A HAND-WRITTEN PROOF AND FINAL PATENT LETTER, CALCULATIONS & SPECIFICATIONS. 1,000-1,800



23

LOT 23. WILLIAM HOBSON CIRCUS MODEL TENT
 CIRCUS MODEL TENT C.1930'S. HOBSON WAS FRIENDS WITH GEORGE BARLOW III, ONE OF THE FINEST CIRCUS MODEL BUILDERS IN THAT ERA. BARLOW WOULD REGULARLY WRITE LETTERS TO HOBSON SEEKING CORRECT TECHNICAL INFORMATION ABOUT THE RINGLING BROS. BARNUM BAILEY SHOW SO THAT HE COULD ACCURATELY REPRESENT THE SHOW WITH HIS MODELS. BARLOW AND BAILEY CIRCUS WITH TENTS BY HOBSON IS REFERENCED IN THE HOBSON COLLECTION AND IT MAY BE LIKELY THAT THIS EXAMPLE WAS HAND-CRAFTED BY WILLIAM HOBSON HIMSELF. IF SO, IT IS A LASTING EXAMPLE OF THE CANVAS USED ON THE GREATEST SHOW ON EARTH. CANVAS TENT STRUCTURE WITH WOODEN DOWELS FOR POLES. 39"X53". 300-600



24

LOT 24. WM. HOBSON CIRCUS TENT MEMORABILIA
 COLLECTION OF LETTERS AND ENVELOPES PERTAINING TO HOBSON'S TENTMAKING. REFERENCES TO WILLIAM LUSHBAUGH, TENTMAKER FOR BARNUM AND BAILY CIRCUS FROM AS EARLY AS THE 1880'S. LETTERHEADS, LETTERS ABOUT TENTMAKING, SUPPLY LISTS, SAMUEL GUMPERTZ LETTERS, CARL HATHAWAY LETTERS, TRADE LETTERS, CANVAS TESTING RESULTS, COLLECTIONS LETTER AND MORE. WILLIAM HOBSON COLLECTION. HOBSON WAS CHIEF TENTMAKER FOR RINGLING BROS. AND BARNUM & BAILEY CIRCUS AND AFFILIATED SHOWS FROM 1927 UNTIL 1939. 300-600



22

LOT 22. WM. HOBSON - GEO. BARLOW CIRCUS TENTS
 HOBSON & BARLOW MEMORABILIA INCLUDING LETTERS FROM BARLOW TO HOBSON, PHOTOGRAPHS OF BARLOW'S MODELS, HOBSON-BARLOW SAIL LOFT PHOTOGRAPH, LETTERS EARLY AS 1932 UP TO JUST A FEW WEEKS BEFORE HOBSON'S UNTIMELY DEATH IN 1939. WOODEN SIGN GIVEN TO HOBSON BY BARLOW. HOBSON WAS FRIENDS WITH BARLOW, ONE OF THE FINEST CIRCUS MODEL BUILDERS OF THE ERA. BARLOW WOULD REGULARLY WRITE LETTERS TO HOBSON SEEKING CORRECT TECHNICAL INFORMATION ABOUT THE RBBB SHOW FOR HIS MODELING ACCURACY. BARLOW AND BAILEY CIRCUS WITH TENTS BY HOBSON IS REFERENCED IN THE HOBSON COLLECTION. 300-600



25

LOT 25. WM. HOBSON CIRCUS TENT MEMORABILIA
 TRADE PUBLICATIONS FOR TENTS, AWNINGS AND HARDWARE. INCLUDES JUTE TRADE PUBLICATION WITH REFERENCE ON PAGE 12 TO THE RBBB TENTS. 100-200



27



LOT 26. BARNUM & BAILEY MEMORABILIA

ORIGINAL BARNUM AND BAILEY LETTERHEAD AND BANK CHECK. WM. HOBSON COLLECTION. HOBSON WAS HIRED BY JOHN RINGLING IN 1927 AND THESE ARE LIKELY SOUVENIRS OBTAINED BY HOBSON FROM THE BARNUM AND BAILEY WINTERQUARTERS IN BRIDGEPORT, CONNECTICUT PRIOR TO THE COMBINED SHOW WINTERQUARTERS RELOCATION TO SARASOTA IN 1928. 100-200



26

LOT 27. RBBB CIRCUS SOUVENIR PENNANT

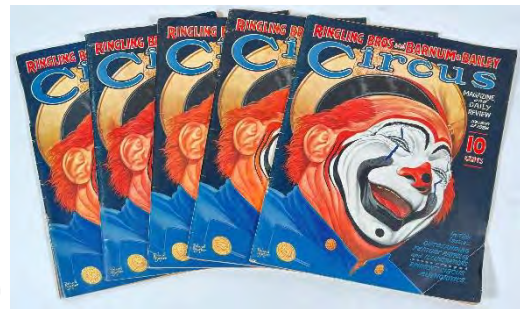
ORIGINAL 1930'S SOUVENIR PENNANT OF THE GREATEST SHOW ON EARTH. WILLIAM HOBSON COLLECTION. 100-200

LOT 28. RBBB CIRCUS CHRISTMAS CARDS

HOLIDAY GREETING CARDS FROM THE GREATEST SHOW ON EARTH. INCLUDES 1930-31, 1934-36, 1938, 1940, 1948. WILLIAM HOBSON COLLECTION. 100-200

LOT 29. RBBB CIRCUS PROGRAMS

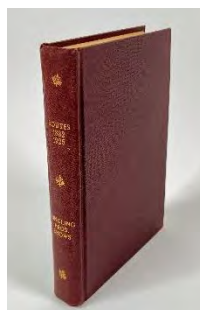
ORIGINAL MAILING PACKAGE SENT FROM THE RBBB PROGRAM PUBLISHER TO WILLIAM HOBSON AT SARASOTA, FLORIDA, WINTERQUARTERS IN 1938. PACKAGE CONTAINS 5 PROGRAMS FOR THE 1938 SEASON. WILLIAM HOBSON COLLECTION. 100-200



29

LOT 30. RINGLING BROS. SHOWS ROUTE BOOK

COVERING THE YEARS 1882 - 1925. THE DAY AND DATES FOR ALL SHOWS FOR THESE YEARS INCLUDING THE 1882 RINGLING BROS. CLASSIC AND COMIC CONCERT COMPANY UP TO THE COMBINING WITH BARNUM IN BAILEY IN 1919 UP TO 1925. 308 PAGES, EXCELLENT CONDITION. WILLIAM HOBSON COLLECTION. 300-600



30



30A

LOT 30A. RBBB CIRCUS WARDROBE

ORIGINAL WARDROBE FRAGMENT FROM THE GREATEST SHOW ON EARTH, C.1928. BEJEWELED FABRIC WITH GOLD TRIM. 8"X15". WILLIAM HOBSON COLLECTION. HOBSON WAS CHIEF TENTMAKER FOR RINGLING BROS. AND BARNUM & BAILEY CIRCUS AND AFFILIATED SHOWS FROM 1927 UNTIL 1939. 100-200



30B

LOT 30B. RINGLING BROS. BARNUM BAILEY CIRCUS PHOTOGRAPH

ORIGINAL PANORAMIC PHOTOGRAPH OF THE SHOW SET UP AT SEASON'S END UPON ITS RETURN HOME TO WINTERQUARTERS IN SARASOTA, FLORIDA ON OCTOBER 27, 1928. UNMOUNTED, ORIGINAL PHOTOGRAPH BY SUPERIOR PHOTO STUDIOS, SARASOTA, FLORIDA. SIX POLE BIG TOP WITH SIDESHOW BANNER LINE AND SHOW FRONT. WILLIAM HOBSON COLLECTION. 200-400

LOT 30C. RINGLING BROS. BARNUM BAILEY CIRCUS PHOTOGRAPH

ORIGINAL SILVER PRINT PANORAMIC PHOTOGRAPH OF THE RINGLING BROS. AND BARNUM & BAILEY CIRCUS LOT SCENE IN CLEVELAND, OHIO ON JULY 11 AND 12, 1932. F. MEINER, PHOTOGRAPHER. A SPLENDID SCENE OF THE RINGLING CANVAS UP ON THE LOT IN THE SHADOWS OF THE NEWLY COMPLETED CLEVELAND STADIUM. UNMOUNTED, 7"X17". WILLIAM HOBSON COLLECTION. 100-200



30C



30D



31



30E

LOT 30D. RINGLING BROS. BARNUM BAILEY CIRCUS POSTER PAWAH - THE WORLD-FAMOUS SACRED WHITE ELEPHANT OF BURMA. ONE SHEET, STROBRIDGE LITHO, 1927. PROFESSIONALLY CONSERVED ON LINEN. 31"X45". 1,000-2,000

LOT 30E. RINGLING BROS. BARNUM BAILEY CIRCUS POSTER FEATURING A CHARGING TIGER. ONE SHEET, ILLINOIS LITHO, CO., 1927. PROFESSIONALLY CONSERVED ON LINEN. 30.75"X44". 800-1,200



32

LOT 31. RINGLING BROS. BARNUM BAILEY CIRCUS POSTER RBBB CIRCUS - THE GREATEST SHOW ON EARTH. COLBY DESIGN, ILLINOIS LITHO, 1929. ONE SHEET, MOUNTED LOOSELY ON BOARD, SOME AREAS OF ABRASION OR SCUFFING, TAPE, EDGE WEAR. A GREAT CANDIDATE FOR RESTORATION. IMAGE 27.25"X40.5", OVERALL 30"X43.75" WILLIAM HOBSON COLLECTION. 800-1,200



31A

LOT 31A. RINGLING BROS. BARNUM BAILEY CIRCUS POSTER THREE RINGS OF PERFORMING ELEPHANTS, SPECTACLE AND CLOWNS. ONE SHEET, MORGAN LITHO, 1932. CHARTEX. 28"X42". 400-600

LOT 32. RINGLING BROS. BARNUM BAILEY CIRCUS POSTER RBBB CIRCUS FEATURING DAINTY MISS LEITZEL - WORLD'S MOST MARVELOUS LADY GYMNAST. ONE SHEET, ILLINOIS LITHO, 1929. CHARTEX. 28"X41.5". 800-1,200



32B



33

LOT 32A. RBBB CIRCUS POSTER

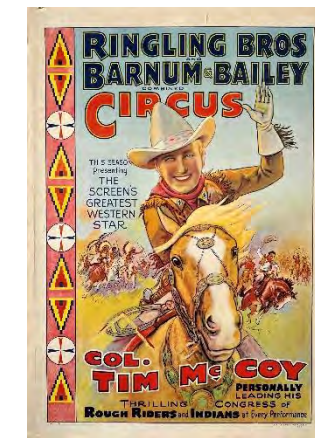
RBBB CIRCUS FEATURING MISS JENNIE ROONEY, THE MOST DARING LADY TRAPEZIST OF ALL TIME. ONE SHEET, CENTRAL PRINTING AND ILLINOIS LITHO, 1933. PROFESSIONALLY CONSERVED ON LINEN. 31"X44.5". 400-800

LOT 32B. RINGLING BROS. BARNUM BAILEY CIRCUS POSTER - GARGANTUA THE GREAT, THE LARGEST GORILLA EVER EXHIBITED - THE WORLD'S MOST TERRIFYING LIVING CREATURE. ONE SHEET, STROBRIDGE LITHO, 1938. PROFESSIONALLY CONSERVED ON LINEN. 30.75"X43.75". 800-1200

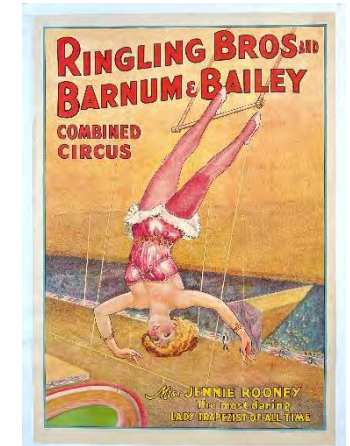
LOT 33. RINGLING BROS. BARNUM BAILEY CIRCUS POSTER - GARGANTUA THE GREAT, THE LARGEST GORILLA EVER EXHIBITED - THE WORLD'S MOST TERRIFYING LIVING CREATURE. HALF SHEET, STROBRIDGE LITHO, 1938. CONSERVED, OLD LINEN BACKING. 19"X27". 800-1,200

LOT 33A. RINGLING BROS. BARNUM BAILEY CIRCUS POSTER - RBBB CIRCUS SIDESHOW, FEATURING STRANGE PEOPLE FROM THE REMOTE CORNERS OF THE EARTH. ONE SHEET, ERIE LITHO, 1934. PROFESSIONALLY CONSERVED ON LINEN. 29.75"X43". 800-1,200

LOT 34. RINGLING BROS. BARNUM BAILEY CIRCUS POSTER - COL. TOM MIX, THE SCREEN'S GREATEST WESTERN STAR, PERSONALLY LEADING HIS THRILLING CONGRESS OF ROUGH RIDERS AND INDIANS AT EVERY PERFORMANCE. ONE SHEET, ERIE LITHO, 1936. PROFESSIONALLY CONSERVED, LINEN BACKED, SMALL AREA OF PAPER TRANSFER ON SHEET. 30.5"X43". 600-900



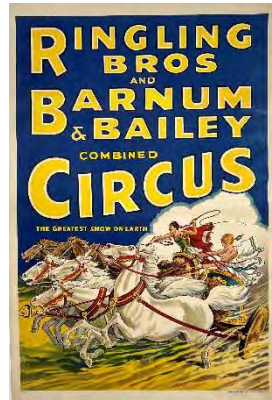
34



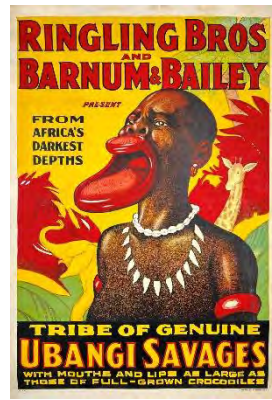
32A



33A



35



36

LOT 35. RINGLING BROS. BARNUM BAILEY CIRCUS POSTER

FEATURING TITLE AND ROMAN CHARIOTS. ONE SHEET, CENTRAL PRINTING AND ILLINOIS LITHO, C.1934. PROFESSIONALLY CONSERVED, LINEN BACKED. 30"X43.5". 400-600

LOT 36. RINGLING BROS. BARNUM BAILEY CIRCUS POSTER

PRESENTING FROM AFRICA'S DARKEST DEPTHS, TRIBE OF GENUINE UBANGI SAVAGES, WITH MOUTHS AND LIPS AS LARGE AS THOSE OF FULL-GROWN CROCODILES. ONE SHEET, ILLINOIS LITHO, 1932. PROFESSIONALLY CONSERVED, LINEN BACKED. 29.5"X43". 800-1,200

LOT 36A. RINGLING BROS. BARNUM BAILEY CIRCUS POSTER

PAT VALDO, CLOWN PORTRAIT. ONE SHEET, WOODCUT, 1929. PROFESSIONALLY CONSERVED ON LINEN, SOME INPAINTING, RESTORATION. 29.5"X43.5". 300-600

LOT 36B. RINGLING BROS. BARNUM BAILEY CIRCUS POSTER

RHINO HEAD AND SHOW TITLE. ONE SHEET, CENTRAL PRINTING AND ILLINOIS LITHO, 1937. PROFESSIONALLY CONSERVED ON LINEN. 30"X44". 300-600

LOT 36C. RINGLING BROS. BARNUM BAILEY CIRCUS POSTER

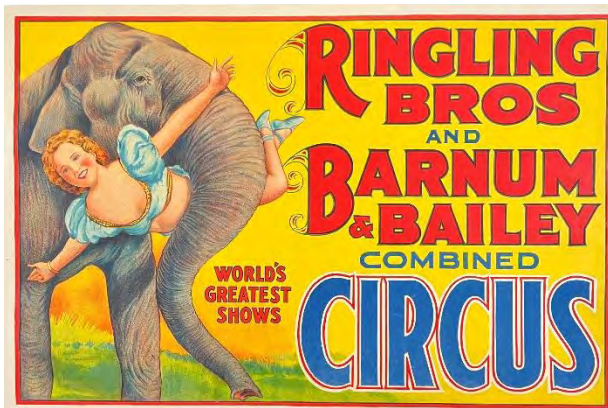
ERICA LOYAL IN THE TRUNK OF YASSO THE ELEPHANT. ONE SHEET, 1933. PROFESSIONALLY CONSERVED ON LINEN. 29.5"X43". 400-800



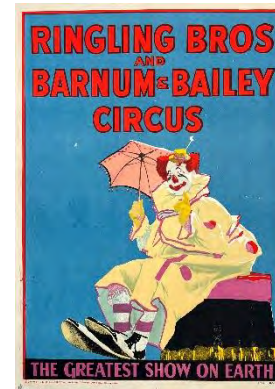
36A



36B



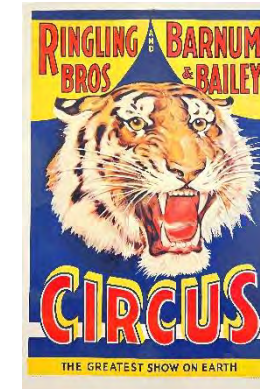
36C



37



38



38A



38B

LOT 37. RINGLING BROS. BARNUM BAILEY CIRCUS POSTER - FEATURING CLOWN, FELIX ADLER, 1943. HALF SHEET, PROFESSIONALLY CONSERVED, LINEN BACKED. 24"X31". 200-400

LOT 38. RINGLING BROS. BARNUM BAILEY CIRCUS POSTER - TIGER AND THE MOON WITH TITLE. ONE SHEET, 1944. OLD LINEN BACKING. 28"X42". 200-400

LOT 38A. RINGLING BROS. BARNUM BAILEY CIRCUS POSTER - TIGER HEAD WITH TITLE. ONE SHEET, ERIE LITHO, 1934. PROFESSIONALLY CONSERVED ON LINEN, PROFESSIONAL RESTORATION. 30"X43". 300-600

LOT 38B. RINGLING BROS. BARNUM BAILEY CIRCUS POSTER - WHITE FACE CLOWN PORTRAIT WITH TITLE. ONE SHEET, ERIE LITHO, 1934. PROFESSIONALLY CONSERVED ON LINEN. 30"X43". 300-600

LOT 39. RINGLING BROS. BARNUM BAILEY CIRCUS POSTER - MONKEYS ENTERING THE CIRCUS. LAWSON WOOD DESIGN, 1943. ONE SHEET, PROFESSIONALLY CONSERVED, LINEN-BACKED. 29.25"X43.5". 300-500

LOT 40. RINGLING BROS. BARNUM BAILEY CIRCUS POSTER - EQUESTRIENNE, 1935. ONE SHEET, ERIE LITHO, PROFESSIONALLY CONSERVED, LINEN BACKED. 31.25"X44". 300-600



39



40

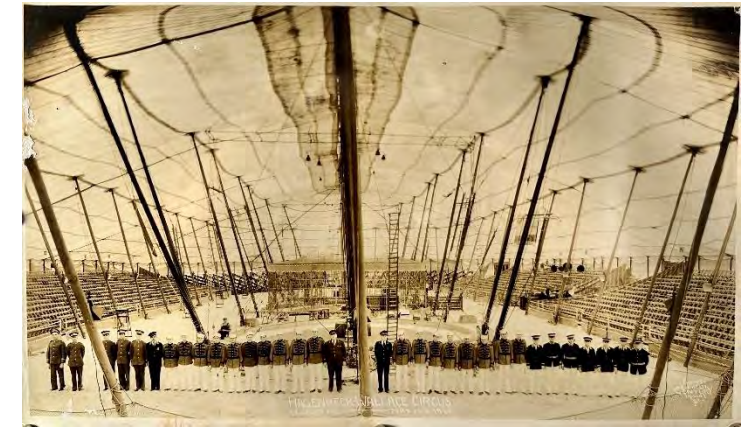


LOT 40A - IMPORTANT AMERICAN CIRCUS PRESENTATION TROPHY

SILVER ENGRAVED PRESENTATION PIECE IN CLARET FORM GIVEN TO JAMES RAYMOND BY CHAUNCEY R. WEEKS AND JOHN J. DRAKE, JANUARY 1854. WEEKS AND DRAKE BECAME PARTNERS WITH AMERICAN TRAVELING MENAGERIE IMPRESARIO, JAMES RAYMOND. JAMES RAYMOND (1795-1854) WAS ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT AMERICAN CIRCUS FIGURES PRIOR TO P.T. BARNUM. RAYMOND MAY HAVE BEEN THE ORIGINATOR OF THE ZOOLOGICAL INSTITUTE AND TRAVELING MENAGERIE. MOST TRAVELING MENAGERIES PRIOR TO 1850 WERE UNDER RAYMOND'S OWNERSHIP. SILVER ENGRAVED CLARET WINE PITCHER WITH EXCEPTIONAL SILVER WORK. HIGH RELIEF GRAPE AND VINE MOTIF. EARLY SILVER WITH NO MAKER OR SILVER MARK. 35 OUNCES IN TOTAL WEIGHT. FIRST TIME TO THE MARKETPLACE AND A RARE CHANCE TO OWN. 14"H
1,200-1,800



41



42

LOTS 41-45 FEATURE THE PHOTOGRAPHIC WORK OF EDWARD J. KELTY (AMERICAN, 1888-1967). THE HOBSON COLLECTION

LOT 41. RBBB CIRCUS - CANVAS DEPARTMENT, JAMES HEALY, SUPERINTENDANT, NEWARK, NEW JERSEY, MAY 1, 1938. CREASING, EDGE TEAR, LOSS AS SHOWN. 12"X20". WILLIAM HOBSON COLLECTION. 200-400



43

LOT 42. HAGENBECK-WALLACE CIRCUS - BIG TOP INTERIOR, ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI, MAY 10, 1934. FANTASTIC VIGNETTE OF THE BIG TOP INTERIOR, USHERS, RINGS, SEATING, IRON CAGE. KELTY CENTURY DOUBLE STAMP ON VERSO, MINOR STAINING. 12"X20". 300-600



44

LOT 43. RBBB CIRCUS - BIG TOP INTERIOR, NEW PRISTINE TENT UNDER THE FIRST STAND IN BROOKLYN, NEW YORK, MAY 19, 1933. KELTY CENTURY DOUBLE STAMP ON VERSO, VERY GOOD CONDITION. 12"X20". 300-600

LOT 44. RBBB CIRCUS - MENAGERIE INTERIOR. THE FIRST STAND OF THE SEASON IN BROOKLYN, NEW YORK, MAY 19, 1933. GOOD CONDITION. 12"X20". 300-600



45

LOT 45. HAGENBECK-WALLACE CIRCUS - BIG TOP INTERIOR, STRAW HOUSE WATCHING A CAR RUN OVER THE CHEST OF A PERFORMING MAN, ON MAY 17, 1934 IN TERRE HAUTE, INDIANA. KELTY CENTURY DOUBLE STAMP ON VERSO. VERY GOOD. 12"X20". 300-600



46



47

LOTS 46-50 FEATURE THE PHOTOGRAPHIC WORK OF EDWARD J. KELTY (AMERICAN, 1888-1967). THE HOBSON COLLECTION.

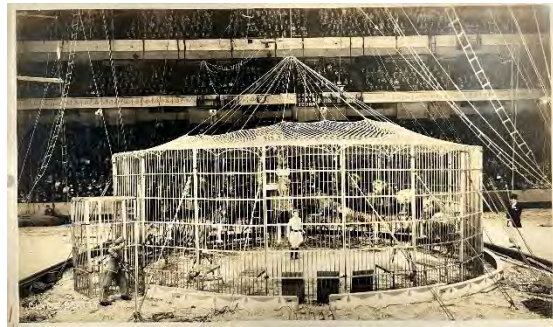
LOT 46. HAGENBECK WALLACE CIRCUS - ST. LOUIS, MO., MAY 1934. BIG TOP, MENAGERIE, SIDESHOW BANNER LINE AND WAGONS. KELTY CENTURY DBL STAMP VERSO. STANING AT LOWER MARGIN, G. 12"X20". 300-600

LOT 47. RINGLING CIRCUS - MIDWAY SCENE WITH VIEWS OF THE MARQUEE MAIN ENTRANCE, TICKET WAGON, SIDESHOW BANNER LINE, BALLY BOX AND CROWD. SPRINGFIELD, MA., JUNE 23, 1934. KELTY CENTURY DBL. STAMP VERSO, VG. 12"X20". 300-600

LOT 48. RINGLING CIRCUS - CLYDE BEATTY IN THE IRON CAGE WITH LIONS AND TIGERS, FRED BRADNA LOOKING ON. RINGLING BROTHERS AND BARNUM & BAILEY CIRCUS AT MADISON SQUARE GARDEN, 1934. KELTY CENTURY DBL. STAMP VERSO. VG. 12"X20". 300-600

LOT 49. SPARKS CIRCUS - CAST, BAND AND EXECUTIVES. ROCKAWAY, LONG ISLAND, NEW YORK, JUNE 8, 1928. KELTY CENTURY STAMP ON VERSO, LIGHT WEAR, GOOD. 12"X20". 200-400

LOT 50. SPARKS CIRCUS - BAYSIDE, NEW YORK CITY, N.Y., JUNE 5, 1929. LATER THAT YEAR, JOHN RINGLING PURCHASED THE SPARKS CIRCUS. KELTY CENTURY DBL. STAMP VERSO. VERY GOOD. 12"X20". 200-400



48



49



50



51



52

LOTS 51-54 FEATURE THE PHOTOGRAPHIC WORK OF EDWARD J. KELTY (AMERICAN, 1888-1967). THE HOBSON COLLECTION.

LOT 51. RINGLING CIRCUS - IRVINGTON, NEW JERSEY, MAY 28, 1934. KELTY CENTURY DBL. STAMP VERSO. SMALL CENTRAL STAIN IN UPPER MARGIN, ELSE GOOD. 12"X20". 200-400

LOT 52. RINGLING CIRCUS - CAST INCLUDING DOLL FAMILY, SIDESHOW, WALLENDAS, CONCELLOS, JACK EARLE, FELIX ADLER, SAMUEL GUMPERTZ, FRED BRADNA, TENTS IN THE BACKGROUND. NEW HAVEN, CT., JUNE 13, 1934. KELTY CENTURY DBL. STAMPS VERSO. VG. 12"X20". 300-600

LOT 53. RINGLING CIRCUS - CAST INCLUDING DOLL FAMILY, SIDESHOW, WALLENDAS, CONCELLOS, JACK EARLE, FELIX ADLER, SAMUEL GUMPERTZ, FRED BRADNA, TENTS IN THE BACKGROUN. NEW HAVEN, CT., JUNE 13, 1934. MARGINAL STAINING, GOOD. 12"X20". 300-600



53

LOT 54. WRESTLING AT MADISON SQUARE GARDEN

PRESENTED BY JACK CURLEY, JIM LONDOS DEFEATED JIM MCMILLEN FOR THE INT'L WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP FEB. 23, 1931. A MAGNIFICENT PHOTO TAKEN OF THE AUDIENCE AND RING IN A SCARCE NON-CIRCUS PHOTOGRAPH BY KELTY. KELTY CENTURY DBL. STAMP VERSO. 12"X20". 600-900



54



55

LOTS 55-57 FEATURE THE PHOTOGRAPHIC WORK OF EDWARD J. KELTY (AMERICAN, 1888-1967). CANESTRELLI COLLECTION

LOT 55. AL G. BARNES CIRCUS - CAST INCLUDING POODLES HANNEFORD AND MABEL STARK. JULY 21, 1934, MONTREAL CANADA. KELTY CENTURY STAMP ON VERSO. MOUNTING TAPE ON VERSO, ELSE GOOD. 12"X20". 200-400

LOT 56. RINGLING CIRCUS - SPECIALTY ACTS INCLUDING THE CANESTRELLIS AND OTHERS. MOUNTING TAPE ON VERSO, STAINING IN UPPER RIGHT CORNER, ELSE GOOD. 12"X20". 200-400

LOT 57. RINGLING CIRCUS - CAST IN THE SHADOWS OF THE BIG TOP. KELTY CENTURY STAMP ON VERSO. VERTICLE CREASING AND SCATTERED STAINING. 12"X20". 200-400

LOT 58. AERIAL KELLYS PHOTOGRAPH PHOTOGRAPH OF EMMETT AND EVA KELLY AS THE AERIAL KELLYS, SEASON 1931. AN EARLY ALTERNATE PERFORMING IMAGE OF EMMETT KELLY BEFORE TRANSITION TO CLOWNING. STUDIO PHOTOGRAPH, UNSIGNED, NOTES ON VERSO. 8"X10". 50-100



56



57



58



58A

LOT 58A. DAN RICE'S GREAT SHOW POSTER

THE EDUCATED MULES, PETE AND BARNEY, IN THEIR LAUGHABLE SCENES, AS THEY APPEAR IN DAN RICE'S GREAT SHOW. A SCARCE MID-19TH CENTURY POSTER. LITHO OF SARONY & CO., NEW YORK, C.1857. ONE SHEET, UNMOUNTED. TONING, LIGHT STAINING AT LOWER MARGIN, MINOR EDGE WEAR. 30"X41". 600-900

LOT 58B. J.M. FRENCH'S ORIENTAL CIRCUS POSTER

J.M. FRENCH'S ORIENTAL CIRCUS AND EGYPTIAN CARAVAN FEATURING MAD. CARLOTTA DEBERGH. HALF SHEET, GIBSON & CO. LITHO, CINCINNATI, C.1868. OLD LINEN BACKING, TONING, SOME STAINING, TAPE BLEEDING, EDGE WEAR. 21"X28". 600-900

LOT 58C. THE GREAT METROPOLITAN OLYMPIAD POSTER

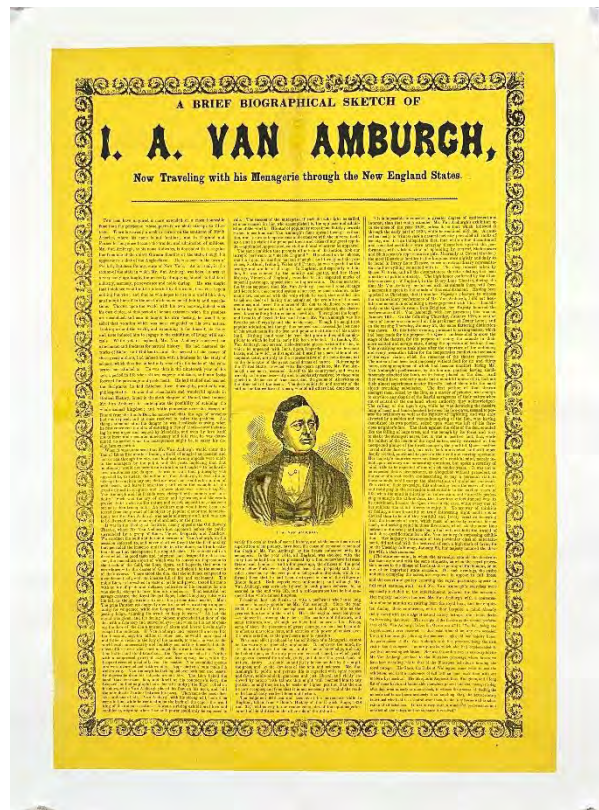
THE BEAUTIFUL BRONCHO HORSES, BRAVO, BONITO, KITTIE, CUPID AND FLORA, AS THEY APPEAR WITH THE GREAT METROPOLITAN OLYMPIAD, CONGRESS OF EDUCATED BRONCHO HORSES AND ANIMAL EXPOSITION. SCARCE POSTER HAVING FOUR FEATURE VIGNETTES AND CENTRAL DISPLAYS OF PERFORMING HORSES. HALF SHEET, CLAY, COSACK & CO., BUFFALO, N.Y. REMNANTS OF DATE TAIL ON LOWER MARGIN. UNMOUNTED, CORNER AND MARGIN WEAR, VERSO TAPE, TONING. 21.5"X27.5". 600-900



58B



58C



58D

LOT 58D. ISAAC VAN AMBURGH BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH POSTER

A BRIEF BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF I.A. VAN AMBURGH, NOW TRAVELING WITH HIS MENAGERIE THROUGH THE NEW ENGLAND STATES, C.1858. LARGE FORMAT PRINTING, LINEN-BACKED. 19.75"X27". 200-400

LOT 59. GENERAL TOM THUMB MEMORABILIA

CUT SIGNATURES AND CABINET CARDS OF MR. AND MRS. GENERAL TOM THUMB AND WIFE. CHARLES S. STRATTON KNOWN AS GENERAL TOM THUMB AND LAVINIA WARREN KNOWN AS MRS. GENERAL TOM THUMB. PRESENTED IN MAT WITH FRAME. FRAMED, 11"X12". 200-400

LOT 59A. ROBERT D. GOOD CIRCUS PHOTOGRAPH COLLECTION

CIRCUS SNAPS BY ROBERT D. GOOD, ALLENTOWN, PENNSYLVANIA. A NICE COLLECTION OF AROUND 200 CIRCUS SNAPS WITH IMAGES OF THE BIG TOP, MIDWAY, LOT SCENES, PARADES, TENT INTERIORS, BACKYARD, PEOPLE, ANIMALS, RAILYARD, UNLOADING TRAINS, WAGONS AND MORE. PRIMARILY MAJOR SHOWS OF THE FIRST THIRD OF THE 20TH CENTURY. INCLUDES ORIGINAL CIRCUS SNAPS TRI-FOLDING BROCHURE. EACH APPROXIMATELY POST CARD SIZE. 200-400



59



59A



59B



59C



59D



59E



59F



59G

LOTS 59B - G ARE FROM THE COLLECTION OF RINGLING BROS. BARNUM BAILEY CIRCUS SHOW MANAGER, ROBERT MACDOUGALL.

THE ROBERT MACDOUGALL COLLECTION:

LOT 59B. ALBUM CONTAINING APPROXIMATELY 400 PHOTOGRAPHS. C.1977, IMAGES OF TRAINS, WAGONS, UNLOADING TRAIN, PERFORMANCE, PERFORMERS IN WARDROBE, CLOWN ALLEY, PROP BUILDING DEPARTMENT. 400-800

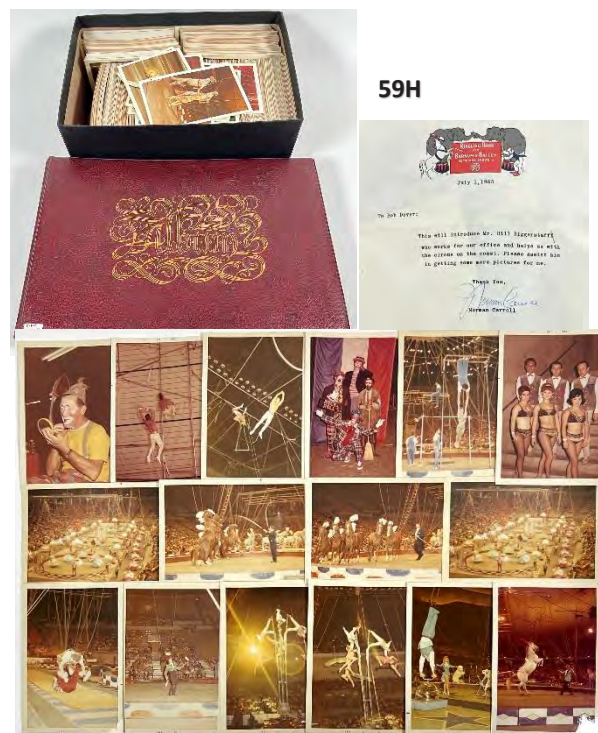
LOT 59C. ALBUM CONTAINING APPROXIMATELY 400 PHOTOGRAPHS, C.1940'S-60'S. RINGLING BROS. BARNUM BAILEY CIRCUS, WAGONS, TRAINS, UNLOADING, SIDESHOW BANNERS, EQUIPMENT, CLYDE REYNOLDS PHOTOS. 400-800

LOT 59D. ALBUM CONTAINING APPROXIMATELY 400 PHOTOGRAPHS. CIRCUS WORLD MUSEUM, MILWAUKEE PARADE, HOXIE BROS. CIRCUS, BIG APPLE, HUNTS CIRCUS, WALLEDA MOTION PICTURE. 400-800

LOT 59E. ALBUM CONTAINING APPROXIMATELY 180 PHOTOGRAPHS. GREAT CIRCUS PARADE, MILWAUKEE. 400-800

LOT 59F. ALBUM CONTAINING APPROXIMATELY 300 PHOTOGRAPHS. CARNIVAL FROM THE 1950'S ON. 400-800

LOT 59G. ALBUM CONTAINING APPROXIMATELY 250 PHOTOGRAPHS. 5"X7" PHOTOGRAPHS OF AMERICAN CIRCUS FROM TURN OF THE CENTURY ON, MAJOR SHOWS. 400-800



59H

LOT 59H. RINGLING BROS. BARNUM BAILEY CIRCUS PHOTO ARCHIVE

BILL BIGGERSTAFF ARCHIVE OF PHOTOGRAPHS TAKEN ON THE WEST COAST OF THE RINGLING SHOW. OVER 1,000 COLOR SNAPSHOTS TAKEN BY BIGGERSTAFF BETWEEN 1966-68. INCLUDED IS A LETTER FROM NORMAN CARROLL TO BOB DOVER INTRODUCING BIGGERSTAFF, ASKING DOVER TO ASSIST BIGGERSTAFF IN OBTAINING MORE PHOTOGRAPHY OF THE SHOW. INCLUDES PERFORMANCE PHOTOGRAPHS OF ALL THE GREATS INCLUDING GUNTHER, JEANETTE WILLIAMS, ROGANA AND MORE. A MAGIFICENT COLLECTION! THE BIGGERSTAFFS OPERATED A PRINTING AND GRAPHIC ARTS BUSINESS THAT CATERED TO THE CIRCUS INDUSTRY AND WERE LONGTIME PRODUCERS OF *THE CIRCUS REPORT*. 600-900



59 I

LOT 59 I. WILD WEST SHOW MEMORABILIA

AN ALBUM COMPILED BY COLLECTOR OF WILD WEST SHOW MEMORABILIA INCLUDING: BUFFALO BILL PHOTOGRAPH, MILLER 101 RANCH PHOTOGRAPH CLIPPING PROGRAM, TIGER BILL LETTERHEAD, CUT LETTERHEADS, TOM MIX, MISC. TICKETS AND MORE. 200-400



59J

LOT 59J. PARKER WATTS CIRCUS MEMORABILIA

AN ALBUM COMPILED BY COLLECTOR OF PARKER WATTS CIRCUS, 1938-9. INCLUDES: TICKETS AND PASSES, LETTERHEAD/ENVELOPES, PHOTOGRAPHS, ROUTE CARDS, BUSINESS FORMS, GREETING CARD, HERALD, TIM MIX AUTOGRAPH. 100-200



59K

LOT 59K. CIRCUS MEMORABILIA COLLECTION

TRIO OF CIRCUS COLLECTOR ALBUMS. ALBUM 1: MAJOR CIRCUSES UP TO 1940. ALBUM 2: MAJOR CIRCUSES FROM 1950-84. ALBUM 3: 1984-2008 MAJOR CIRCUSES. INCLUDES PHOTOS, ROUTES, LETTERHEAD, TICKETS, HERALDS, PROGRAMS AND MORE. 300-600



59 L



LOT 59L. AXEL GAUTIER ELEPHANT PERFORMANCE
CIRCUS WARDROBE ONCE WORN BY AXEL GAUTIER (1942-1993). GAUTIER JOINED THE RINGLING BROTHERS AND BARNUM & BAILEY CIRCUS IN 1958, WORKING HIS WAY UP TO HEAD ELEPHANT TRAINER. ONCE BILLED AS THE MASTER OF PACHYDERMIC PROFESSORSHIP, GAUTIER WAS KNOWN FOR HIS TRAINING, EXQUISITE ELEPHANT TRICKS AND WELL-KEPT APPEARANCE OF THE ELEPHANT TROUPE. GAUTIER WAS TRAGICALLY KILLED BY AN ELEPHANT IN 1993 WHILE ON A VISIT TO AN ELEPHANT CONSERVATORY. EAVES COSTUME IN BLUE WITH WHITE TRIM, LABELED WITH PERFORMER NAME. 600-900



59M



LOT 59M. CLYDE BEATTY COLE BROS. CIRCUS
ORIGINAL CIRCUS WARDROBE AS WORN BY A WORKER ON THE CLYDE BEATTY COLE BROS. CIRCUS. SHOW WEAR AS EXPECTED WITH WORKING UNIFORM. SIZE MEDIUM REGULAR. 100-200



59N



LOT 59N. RINGLING BARNUM & BAILEY BROS. CIRCUS
ORIGINAL CIRCUS WARDROBE AS WORN BY A WORKER ON THE RINGLING BROTHERS AND BARNUM & BAILEY CIRCUS. SHOW WEAR AS EXPECTED WITH USE. SIZE SMALL REGULAR. 100-200



59 - O



59P



59Q



59R

LOT 59 - O. JEANETTE WILLIAMS & FAMILY CURRENCY COLLECTION - A FOLIO OF OLD-WORLD CURRENCY, PRIMARILY GERMAN. JEANETTE WILLIAMS, WILLIAMS FAMILY COLLECTION. 100-200

LOT 59P. RINGLING BROS. CIRCUS BANK CHECKS AUTOGRAPHS - SERIES OF THREE RINGLING BROS. BANK CHECKS AS SIGNED BY THE BROTHERS. CHARLES RINGLING, 1916. HENRY RINGLING, 1913. AL RINGLING, 1912. AUTHENTIC, SCARCE. 300-600

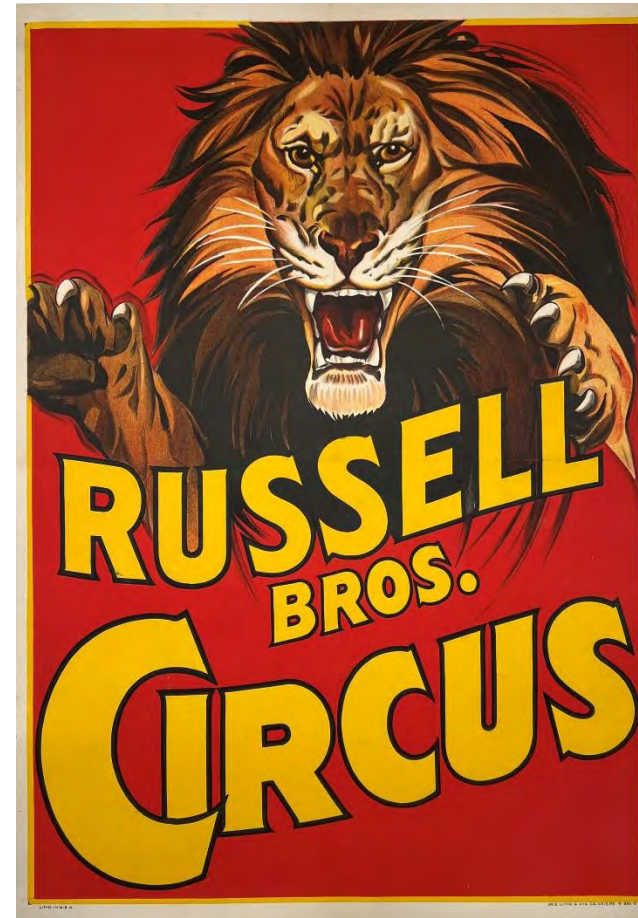
LOT 59Q. MILLER BROTHERS 101 RANCH SCRIP ORIGINAL MILLER BROTHERS 101 RANCH - ROUND UP SCRIP, 20 BUCKS, 1924. REMNANTS OF SCRAPBOOK MOUNTING CORNERS. 50-100

LOT 59R. G.W. LILLIE - PAWNEE BILL COLLECTION OF HOLIDAY GREETING CARDS FROM G.W. LILLIE, ALSO KNOWN AS PAWNEE BILL. ONE WITH ORIGINAL MAILING ENVELOPE, 1941. ORIGINAL AND FACSIMILE SIGANTURES. 200-400

LOT 59S. RINGLING BROS. BARNUM BAILEY CIRCUS POLICE. OBSOLETE POLICE CHIEF BADGE BY SMITH & WARREN. RINGLING BROS. BARNUM & BAILEY CIRCUS - GREATEST SHOW ON EARTH - 146TH SEASON. LIMITED EDITION FANTASY BADGE PROFESSIONALLY MADE BY SMITH AND WARREN FOR PRIVATE CIRCULATION TO POLICE WORKING SECURITY DURING STAND. NOT ISSUED BY RBBB. 200-400



59S

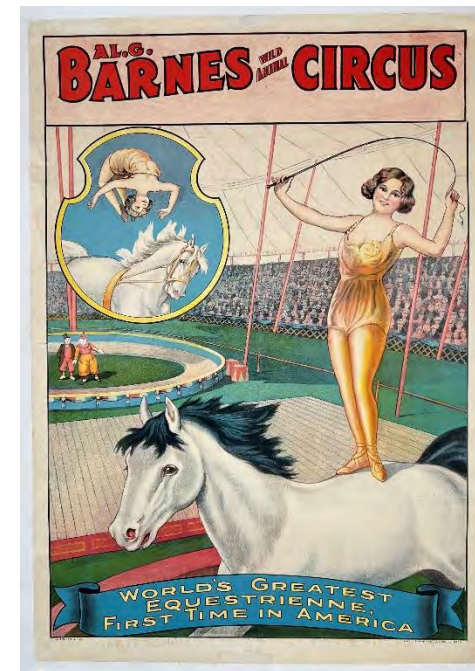


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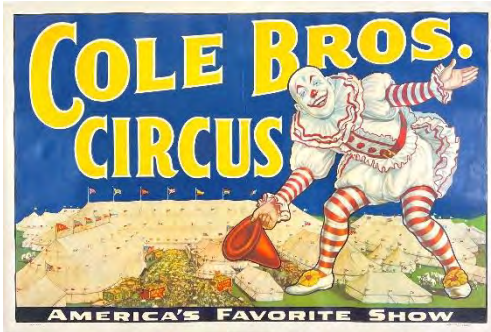
LOT 60. RUSSELL BROS. CIRCUS POSTER A LARGE RUSSELL BROS. CIRCUS POSTER FEATURING CHARGING LION WITH SHOW TITLE. TWO SHEET, ERIE LITHO, 1940'S. PROFESSIONALLY CONSERVED, LINEN BACKED, 42"X55". 500-800



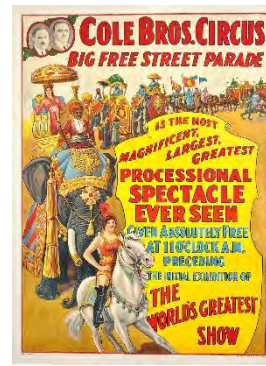
62

LOT 61. AL G. BARNES CIRCUS POSTER AL G. BARNES 4 RING WILD ANIMAL CIRCUS AND THE ALL-NEW SPECTACLE, POCAHONTAS AT THE COURT OF QUEEN ANNE. ONE SHEET, OLD ERIE LITHO, 1920'S. MOUNTED AND VARNISHED ON BOARD. 30"X43". 300-500

LOT 62. AL G. BARNES CIRCUS POSTER AL G. BARNES WILD ANIMAL CIRCUS - WORLD'S GREATEST EQUESTRIENNE, FIRST TIME IN AMERICA. ONE SHEET, ERIE LITHO, 1930'S. PROFESSIONALLY CONSERVED, LINEN BACKED. 30.75"X42". 400-600



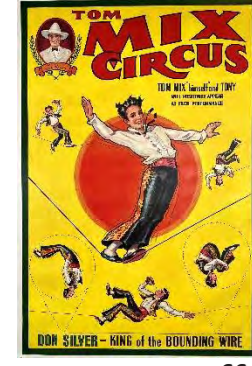
63A



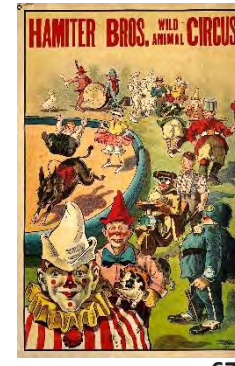
63E



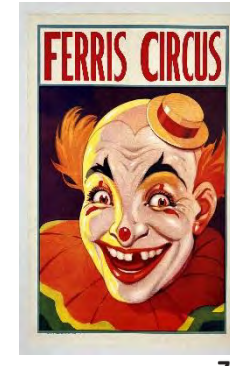
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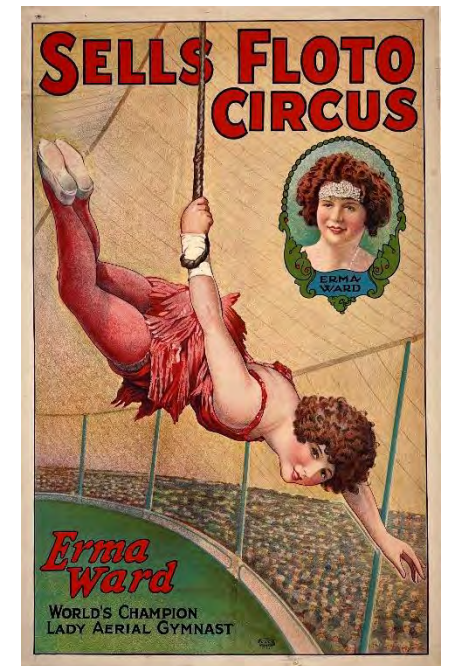
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67



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65



63B

COLE BROS. CIRCUS POSTERS

LOT 63. ALLEN KING - SENSATION OF WORLD'S FAIR AND LIVE POWER EXHIBIT. HALF SHEET, ERIE LITHO, 1930'S. PROFESSIONALLY CONSERVED, LINEN BACKED. 21"X30". 200-400

LOT 63A. CLOWN WITH TENTS IN THE BACKGROUND. ONE SHEET, U.S. POSTER, 1935. PROFESSIONALLY CONSERVED ON LINEN. 32"X47.5". 300-600

LOT 63B. CLYDE BEATTY, GREATEST WILD ANIMAL TRAINER OF ALL TIME. ONE SHEET, ERIE LITHO, 1935. ONE SHEET, ERIE LITHO, 1935. PROFESSIONALLY CONSERVED ON LINEN. 30"X42.5". 300-600

LOT 63C. THE CHILDREN'S FAVORITE CIRCUS. ONE SHEET, ERIE LITHO, 1935. PROFESSIONALLY CONSERVED ON LINEN. 30"X42.5". 300-600

LOT 63D. RETURN HOME AFTER A TRIUMPHAL CONQUEST OF THE OLD WORLD. ONE SHEET, ERIE LITHO, 1935. PROFESSIONALLY CONSERVED ON LINEN. 30.75"X42". 300-600

LOT 63E. BIG FREE STREET PARADE. ONE SHEET, ERIE LITHO, 1935. PROFESSIONALLY CONSERVED ON LINEN. 30"X44". 300-600

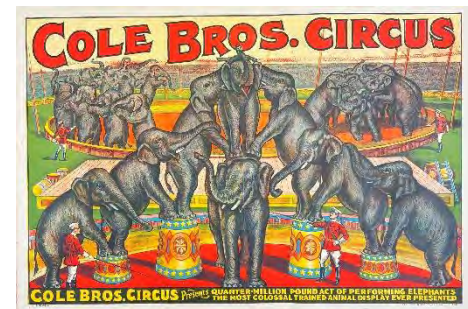
LOT 63F. QUARTER-MILLION POUND ACT OF PERFORMING ELEPHANTS. ONE SHEET, ERIE LITHO, 1935. PROFESSIONALLY CONSERVED ON LINEN. 30.5"X43.5". 300-600



63C



63D



63F

LOT 64. PARKER AND WATTS CIRCUS POSTER

DISPLAY OF PERFORMING BEARS, 1938-9. ONE SHEET, OLD ERIE LITHO, PROFESSIONALLY CONSERVED, LINEN BACKED. 30"X43". 500-800

LOT 65. SELLS FLOTO CIRCUS POSTER

ERMA WARD - WORLD'S CHAMPION AERIAL GYMNAST, C.1920'S. ONE SHEET, PROFESSIONALLY CONSERVED, LINEN BACKED. 27.5"X42". 800-1,200

LOT 66. TOM MIX CIRCUS POSTER

DON SILVER - KING OF THE BOUNDING WIRE, C.1935. ONE SHEET, PROFESSIONALLY CONSERVED, RESTORED MARGINS, LINEN BACKED. 29"X43". 400-600

LOT 67. HAMITER BROS. CIRCUS POSTER

ONE SHEET, OLD ERIE LITHO, 1930'S. OLD LINEN BACKING, GROMMETS AT TOP CORNERS. 27"X41". 300-600

LOT 68. CHRISTY BROS. CIRCUS POSTER

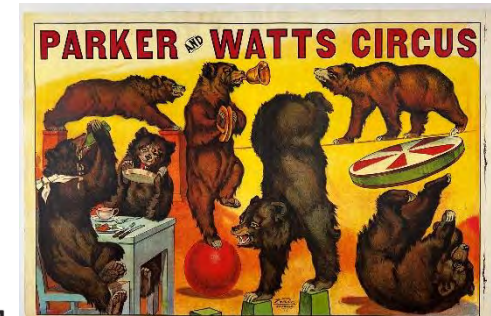
1920'S. ONE SHEET, RIVERSIDE PRINTING. MOUNTED ON OLD LINEN, GROMMETS AT UPPER CORNERS. 27.5"X41.5". 400-800

LOT 69. CHRISTY BROS. CIRCUS POSTER

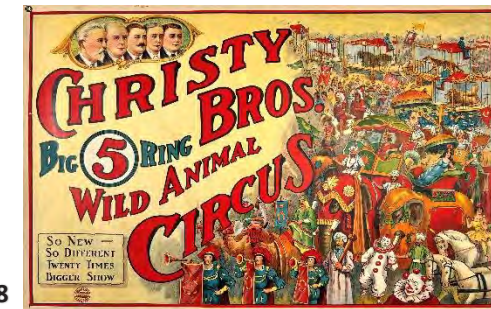
C.1925. ONE SHEET, RIVERSIDE PRINTING, 1925. PROFESSIONALLY CONSERVED, LINEN-BACKED. 30"X42.75". 400-800

LOT 70. FERRIS CIRCUS POSTER

HALF SHEET, DONALDSON LITHO, 1930'S. PROFESSIONALLY CONSERVED, LINEN BACKED. 23"X31". 300-500



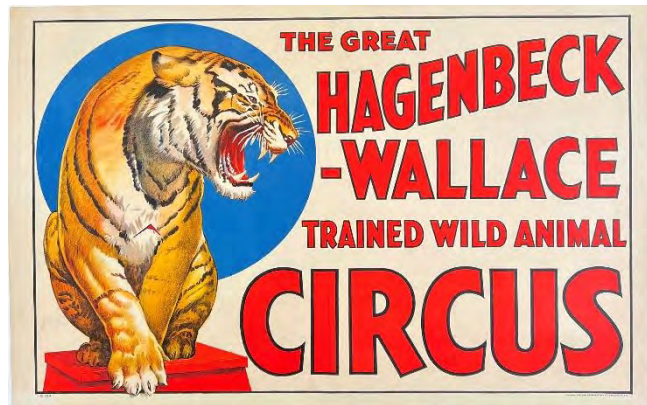
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70B

HAGENBECK-WALLACE CIRCUS POSTERS

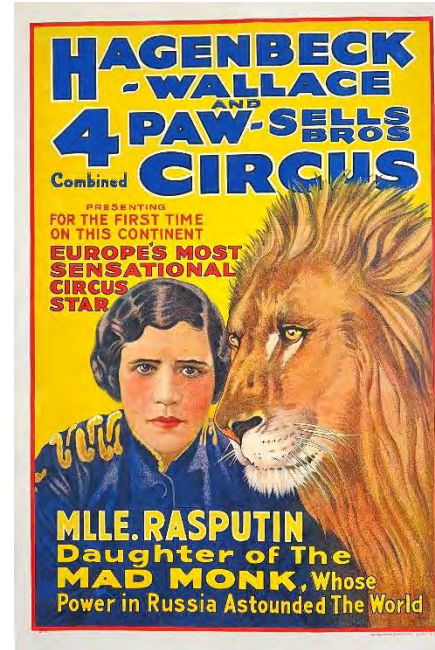
LOT 70A. HAGENBECK-WALLACE 4PAW-SELLS BROS. CIRCUS POSTER - EUROPE'S MOST SENSATIONAL CIRCUS STAR - Mlle. Rasputin - Daughter of the Mad Monk, whose power in Russia astounded the world. One sheet, Central Printing and Illinois Litho, 1935. Professionally conserved on linen. 29.25"x43.25". 300-600

LOT 70B. TIGER ON A PEDESTAL. ONE SHEET, CENTRAL PRINTING AND ILLINOIS LITHO, 1934. PROFESSIONALLY CONSERVED ON LINEN. 29.5"x43.25". 300-600

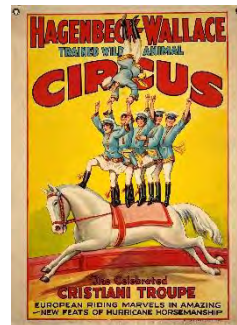
LOT 71. THE CELEBRATED CRISTIANI TROUPE - NEW FEATS OF HURRICANE HORSEMANSHIP. ERIE LITHO, 1930'S. MOUNTED ON OLD LINEN, GROMMETS AT TOP CORNERS, REMNANTS OF DATE TAIL. HALF SHEET, 20.5"x28". 200-400

LOT 72. THE GREAT ANGELO TROUPE - ACROBATIC MARVELS IN UNBELIVABLE FEATS. ERIE LITHO, 1943. ONE SHEET, PROFESSIONALLY CONSERVED, LINEN BACKED. 31"x44". 400-600

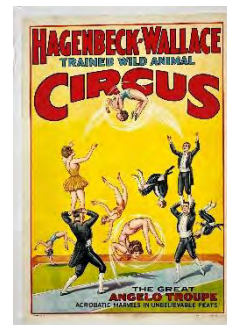
LOT 73. GIRAFFE-NECK WOMAN FROM BURMA. CENTRAL PRINTING AND ILLINOIS LITHO, 1933. ONE SHEET, PROFESSIONALLY CONSERVED, LINEN BACKED. 30"x43.5". 600-900



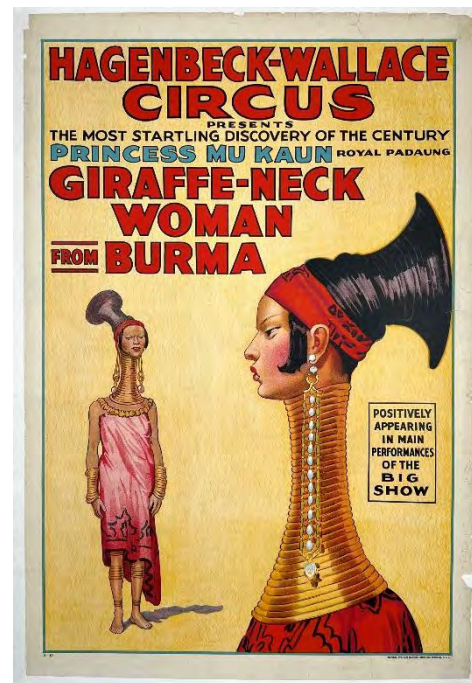
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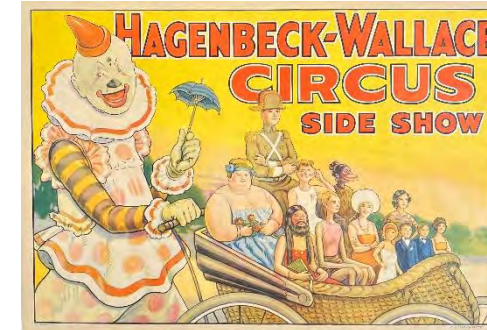
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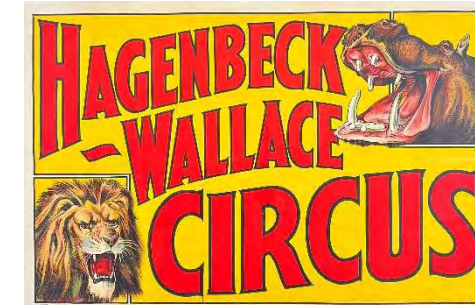
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73



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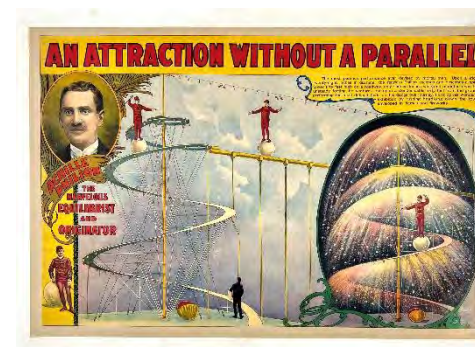
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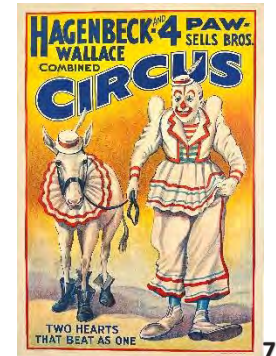
74



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73B



73D

HAGENBECK-WALLACE CIRCUS POSTERS

LOT 73A. SIDESHOW ACTS. ONE SHEET, ERIE LITHO, 1934. SCATTERED FOXING. PROFESSIONALLY CONSERVED ON LINEN. 29.5"x42.5". 400-800

LOT 73B. POODLES AND THE ORIGINAL HANNEFORD FAMILY. ONE SHEET, ERIE LITHO, 1932. PROFESSIONALLY CONSERVED ON LINEN, INPAINTING. 30"x44". 300-600

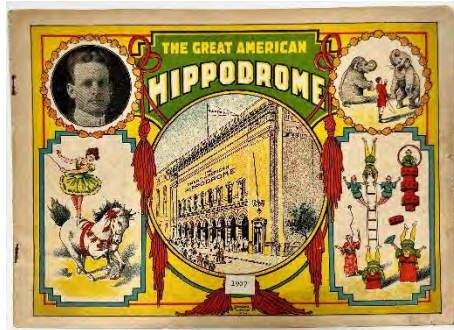
LOT 73C. LION AND HIPPO WITH TITLE. ONE SHEET, ERIE LITHO, 1934. PROFESSIONALLY CONSERVED ON LINEN. 28.75"x43". 300-600

LOT 73D. TWO HEARTS BEAT AS ONE. ONE SHEET, ERIE LITHO, 1935. PROFESSIONALLY CONSERVED ON LINEN. 31.5"x44". 300-600

LOT 73E. HIPPO WITH TITLE. ONE SHEET, ERIE LITHO, 1934. PROFESSIONALLY CONSERVED ON LINEN. 31"x44". 300-600

LOT 74. THE GREAT VICTORINA TROUPE POSTER ORIGINATORS AND PRESENTERS OF THE MOST MARVELOUS SWORD SWALLOWING ACT ON EARTH. ONE SHEET, DONALDSON LITHO, C.1910'S. FOLDS, LOSS, EDGE WEAR, MOUNTED ON ARTIST PAPER. 28"x42". 400-600

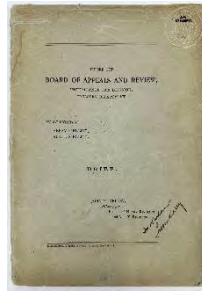
LOT 75. ATTRACTION WITHOUT PARALLEL ACHILLE PHILION, THE GREAT EQUILIBRIST. ONE SHEET, THE COURIER CO., BUFFALO, N.Y., 1899. PROFESSIONALLY CONSERVED, LINEN BACKED, 45.75"x32.5". 1,000-1,500



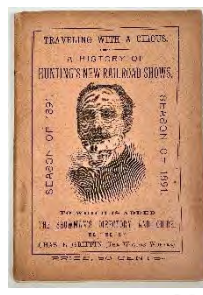
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78



84

LOT 76. 1907 GREAT AMERICAN HIPPODROME PROGRAM - ST. PAUL, MINNESOTA, 1907. STANDARD SHOW PRINT, ST. PAUL, MN. 100-200

LOT 77. 1910 RHODA ROYAL CIRCUS PROGRAM CIRCUS, HIPPODROME & WILD WEST PROGRAM, COLUMBUS, OH. THREE ROONEYS, DUTTONS, TY BELL TRIO, NELSON FAMILY, BARTIK RUSSIAN COSSACKS, SIEGRISTS, WILD WEST. 100-200

LOT 78. RINGLING ESTATES INHERITANCE TAX BRIEF 1923 BRIEF COMPILED BY JOHN M. KELLY, ATTORNEY FOR THE ESTATES OF HENRY AND ALF T. RINGLING. BOARD OF APPEALS & REVIEW, INHERITANCE TAX DIV., TREASURY DEPT., DISCOVERY OF RINGLING'S INTERESTS AMONG CIRCUS BUSINESSES. 100-200

LOT 79. BARNUM & BAILEY REALM MAGAZINES 1903, 1904, 1906. 200-400

LOT 80. JOHN ROBINSON CIRCUS TOUR BOOKLET 1923 ROUTE, THE 100TH ANNUAL TOUR. 100-200

LOT 81. JOHN ROBINSON SOUVENIR ROUTE BOOKLET 1917 SOUVENIR ROUTE BOOKLET. 100-200

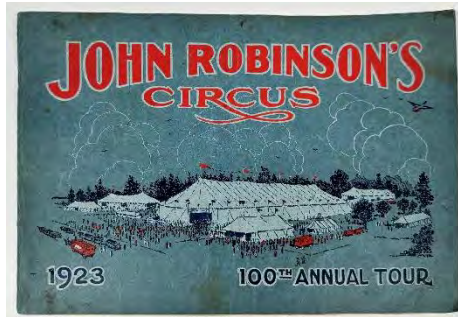
LOT 82. SUN BROTHERS CIRCUS ROUTE BOOK 1913 INCL. WALLETT FAMILY, TAN ARAKI'S, CHEERFUL GARDINER. SUN BROS. 1892-1918. 100-200

LOT 83. 1896 BARNUM & BAILEY CIRCUS ROUTE BOOK EXECUTIVE EDITION ROUTE BOOK, CHARLES HUTCHINSON. HAND-TOOLED METAL COVERS, RIBBON BINDING. DAY-BY-DAY ACCOUNTS. 400-800

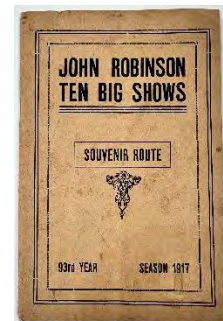
LOT 84. HUNTING'S NEW RAILROAD SHOWS 1891 ROUTES BOOK. HUNTINGS 1888-1898. 100-200



79



80



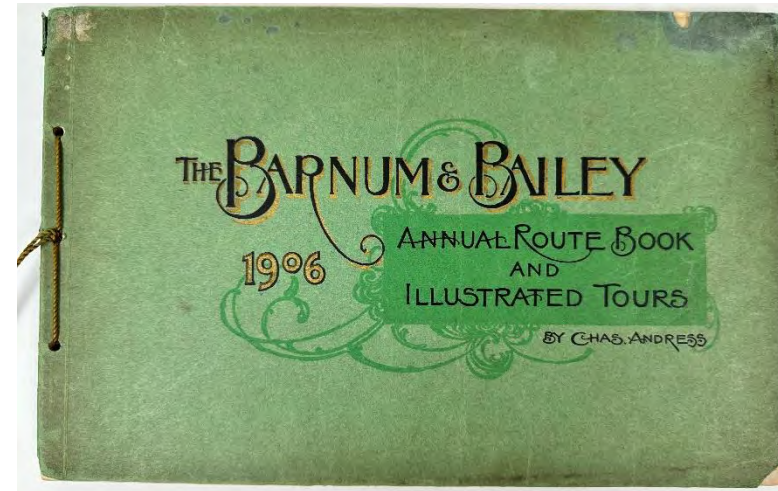
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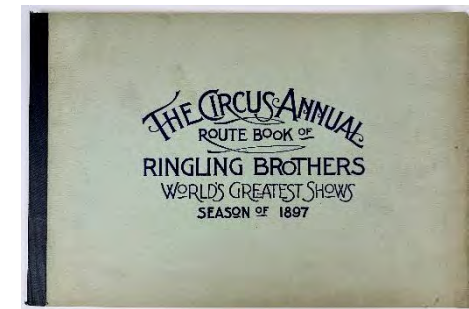
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85



87



88



89

LOT 85. BARNUM & BAILEY IN THE OLD WORLD IN THE OLD WORLD, 1897-1901. A SCARCE PRESENTATION COPY FROM THE AUTHOR HARVEY L. WATKINS TO IMRE KIRALFY, AN INFLUENTIAL SPECTACLE PRODUCER OF THE ERA. PRESENTED AT LUCERNE, SWITZERLAND, AUGUST 27, 1902. COMPLETE COVERAGE OF THE SHOW'S TREK THROUGH THE OLD-WORLD INCLUDING ROUTES, SUMMARIES AND TIPPED-IN MAPS. 200-400

LOT 86. BARNUM & BAILEY ROUTE BOOK 1906 ROUTE BOOK AND ILLUSTRATED TOURS, COMPILED BY CHARLES ADDRESS. 100-200

LOT 87. DAY BY DAY WITH BARNUM & BAILEY DAY-BY-DAY FOR THE SEASONS 1903 AND 1904. COMPILED AND PUBLISHED BY CHARLES ADDRESS. 200-300

LOT 88. RINGLING BROTHERS CIRCUS - CIRCUS ANNUAL CIRCUS ANNUAL, ROUTE BOOK. SEASON OF 1897. 100-200

LOT 89. 1901 RINGLING BROS. CIRCUS ANNUAL COVERING ROUTES, PERFORMERS, DAY-BY-DAY HAPPENINGS. RESTORED COVERS AND BINDINGS, MISSING PAGES 1-7. SOLD AS FOUND. 100-200



91

LOT 90. RINGLING BROS. - ALBERT HODGINI
EQUESTRIENNE TROUPE - MISS DAISY (RINGLING BROS., 1908-14). ANTIQUE DRESS FORM COMMEMORATING HODGINI'S ROLE AS MISS DAISY IN DRAG. HAND-PAINTED CANVAS ON FORM STAND. 63"H. 600-900



90

LOT 91. LARGE CIRCUS CARNIVAL LION SCULPTURE
HAND-CARVED, PROFESSIONALLY RESTORED. MODULAR DESIGN IN SEVEN SECTIONS. USED POSSIBLY AS A SHOW FRONT OR DISPLAY. 72"H, 72"L, 18"W. 800-1,200

LOT 92. TURNER BROS. MINIATURE CIRCUS MODEL
ALETA ALBERT E. TURNER (AMERICAN, 1922-2011). PROFESSIONAL PHOTOGRAPHER WHOSE HOBBIES WERE CIRCUS AND RAILROAD MODELS. THIS MODEL REPRESENTS A LIFETIME OF BUILDING. HO SCALE MODEL WITH ANIMATION, THE MODEL BEGAN IN 1947 AND CONSTRUCTION CONTINUED UNTIL HIS DEATH AT THE AGE OF 88 IN 2011. DETAILED OLD TIME CIRCUS MODEL BUILT TO 1/87 SCALE. ON DISPLAY, THE CIRCUS IS 4' X 9' BUT BREAKS DOWN TO FOUR PARTS THAT JOIN TOGETHER WITH TRANSPORT POSSIBLE IN SPECIALLY DESIGNED CRATES. TRAIN UNLOADING SCENE WITH 110 WAGONS AND TRUCKS, BACKLOT WITH COOK'S TENT AND DRESSING TENT, ANIMATED HOT AIR BALLOON THAT FLOATS UP AND DOWN CARRYING A STRONGMAN HANGING FROM THE BASKET. HAND CARVED PERFORMERS, ANIMALS AND AUDIENCE FROM PINE. SOME PLASTIC WAS ADDED IN LATER YEARS. OVER 2,000 CHARACTERS IN THE DISPLAY. THREE-RING BIG TOP, SPEC PARADE, CLOWN ALLEY, MIDWAY AND MORE. CITY BLOCK ADJACENT TO THE BIG TOP DISPLAY WITH ANIMATION. 20 ANIMATED FEATURES INCORPORATING 270 MOVING FIGURES. WELL TRAVELED AND EXHIBITED DISPLAY. VIDEO: <https://youtu.be/hLMwGGcYF3I> THE MODEL IS CURRENTLY LOCATED IN SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH.



92



LOT 93. ROSAIRE PERKY PEKES STAGECOACH WAGON
WORLD-REKNOWNED DOG ACT PRESENTED BY DAVID ROSAIRE. WORLD TRAVELED STAGECOACH AS USED IN THE ACT. THE ACT STARTED IN 1958 WITH THIS COACH REPLACING A PREVIOUS VERSION IN THE EARLY 1970'S. GREAT DANE PULLS THE COACH WITH BABOON DRIVING. COMMISSIONED ORIGINALLY BY ERNIE STEVENSON WHO WENT BY NO-NO THE CLOWN. LAST USED IN BRANSON SILVER DOLLAR CITY IN 2020. THE COACH HAS PLAYED SHOWS INCLUDING, BIG APPLE, BILLY SMART, FOSTERS, BLACKPOOL TOWER, LONDON, ROBERT BROS., KNIE, KRONE, HANNEFORD, FAIR DATES AND LAS VEGAS.
VIDEO: [http://www.circopedia.org/David_Rosaire_BAC_Video_\(1989\)](http://www.circopedia.org/David_Rosaire_BAC_Video_(1989))

7'9" END-OF-WHEEL TO END-OF-WHEEL NOT INCLUDING HITCH, 3'10" HITCH, 4'4"H, 3"W, 34" DIAMETER REAR WHEEL, 21" DIAMETER FRONT WHEEL. CROFUT WHEELS WERE REPLACED IN THE LAST FEW YEARS AT A COST OF OVER \$2,000.

DUE TO LEGAL ISSUES WHILE ON EXHIBITION IN LAS VEGAS, AN EARLY RENDITION OF THE WAGON BORE WELLS FARGO EXPRESS CO. AND WAS COVERED UP WITH THE ACT'S TITLE. THE ORIGINAL WELLS FARGO EXPRESS CO. TITLE EXISTS BENEATH THE ACT SIGNAGE. 4,000-6,000





94

LOT 94. HUMAN CANNONBALL OUTFIT
 AUTHENTIC SHOW-USED HUMAN CANNONBALL RIG. CHEVROLET S-10 CHASSIS AND CAB, COMPLETE HYDRAULICS AND MECHANISMS. PLEASE INSPECT ONLINE CATALOG PHOTOS FOR CONDITION. THIS UNIT HAS NOT BEEN TESTED AND IS SOLD AS-IS, WHERE-IS. LONG GUARDED SECRETS OF THE ACT REVEALED HERE IN THE MARKETPLACE. LOCATED IN THE SARASOTA, FLORIDA AREA. BUYER RESPONSIBLE FOR REMOVAL FROM EXISTING TRAILER AND LOADING ON TO THEIR OWN TRANSPORT WITHIN 30 DAYS POST-AUCTION. 1,000-2,000



LOT 95. RINGLING BROS. BARNUM BAILEY CIRCUS WAGON

AUTHENTIC WAGON #61 FROM THE GREATEST SHOW ON EARTH. THESE WAGONS WERE USED FOR TRANSPORT OF PROPS, SUPPLY, WARDROBE AND CONCESSIONS ON THE SHOW. CURRENTLY LOCATED IN THE TAMPA BAY, FL. AREA. BUYER RESPONSIBLE FOR REMOVAL FROM THE PROPERTY. WAGON IS ON GOOD WHEELS AND TIRES AND CAN BE ROLLED WITH EQUIPMENT TO LOAD. 246"L, 97"W, 113"H. 85" TRACK WIDTH AND 219" WHEELBASE. 1,000-2,000

95



LOT 96. SPARKS CIRCUS POSTER – PANEL, ERIE LITHO, 1916. A VERY SCARCE POSTER. UNMOUNTED, TEARS AT FOLDS, EDGE WEAR, A GOOD CANDIDATE FOR RESTORATION. 14"X41". 400-600

LOT 97. RINGLING BROS. BARNUM BAILEY CIRCUS POSTER - THE GREAT ALOYS - WHO CULMINATES HIS STARTLING SERIES OF BREATH-TAKING AERIAL FEATS WITH A FRIGHTFUL DROP THROUGH SPACE WITH HIS HEAD IN A HANGMAN'S NOOSE! PANEL, ERIE LITHO, 1938. UNMOUNTED. 14"X41". 200-300

LOT 98. SEILS-STERLING CIRCUS POSTER - THE SHOW OF A THOUSAND WONDERS - THE LINDEMAN BROTHERS - OWNERS, C.1929. PANEL, RIVERSIDE PRINTING. UNMOUNTED, EDGE TEARS. A GOOD CANDIDATE FOR RESTORATION. 14"X41.5". 200-300

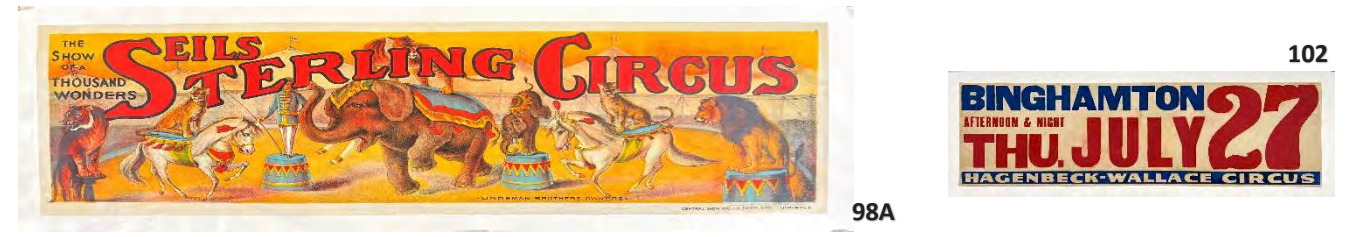
LOT 98A. SEILS STERLING CIRCUS POSTER - THE SHOW OF A THOUSAND WONDERS - THE LINDEMAN BROTHERS - OWNERS, C.1937. PANEL, RIVERSIDE PRINTING. PROFESSIONALLY CONSERVED ON LINEN. 16"X44". 300-600

LOT 99. HUNT EDDY COMBINED CIRCUS POSTER - FEATURING LIBERTY HORSE ACT AND MAJORETTE ON ELEPHANT, C.1930'S. PANEL, UNMOUNTED, VERY GOOD. 14"X41". 100-200

LOT 100. RINGLING BROS. BARNUM BAILEY CIRCUS POSTER - THE GREAT WALKMIR TRIO. CHATTANOOGA, OCTOBER 24, 1935. PANEL, UNMOUNTED, FOLDS AS ISSUED, BRILLIANT COLORS. 14"X46". 200-300

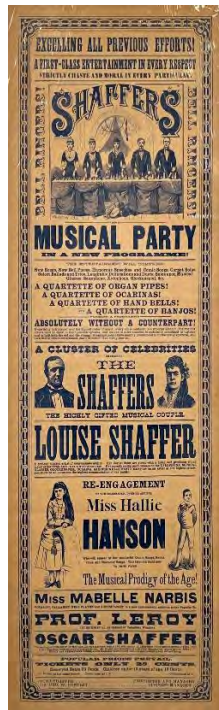
LOT 101. COLE & ROGERS COMBINED SHOWS POSTER - PANEL, OLD ERIE LITHO, C.1920'S. UNMOUNTED, FOLDS AS ISSUED, BRILLIANT COLORS. 13.5"X41". 200-300

LOT 101A. COLE BROS. CIRCUS POSTER - HOUSTON, 1940. PANEL. CONSERVED ON LINEN. 200-400

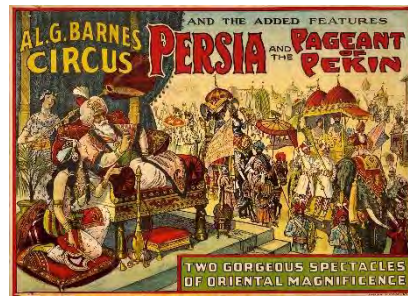


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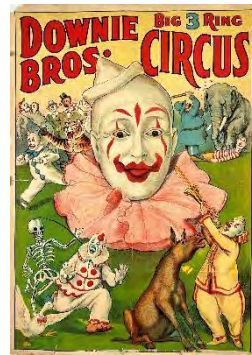
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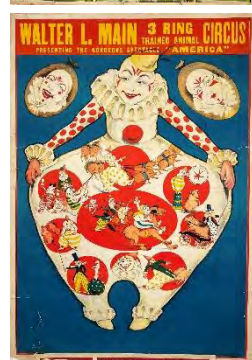
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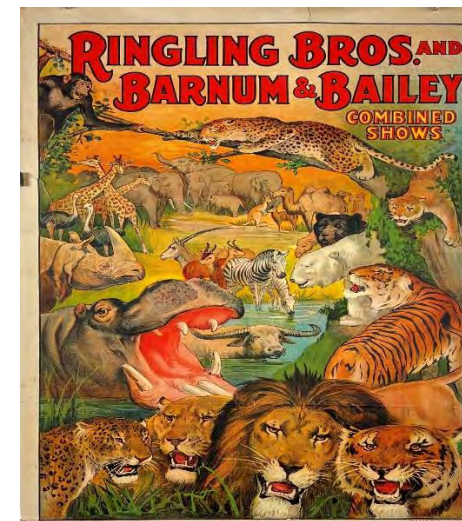
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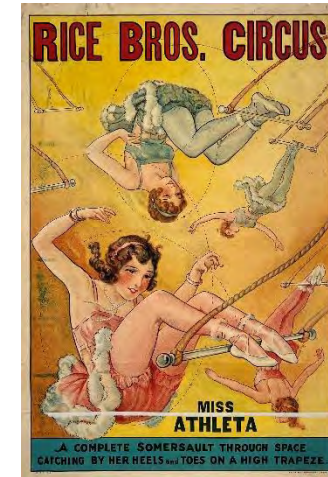


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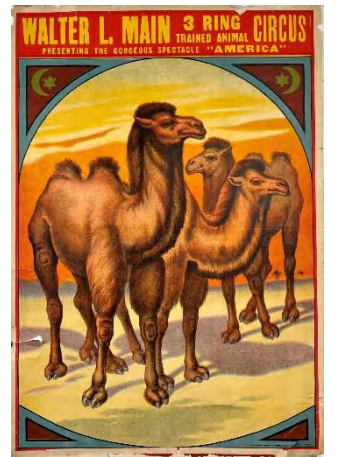


RINGLING BROS. AND BARNUM & BAILEY CHATTAHOOGA WARNER PARK FRI. SEPT. 11

109



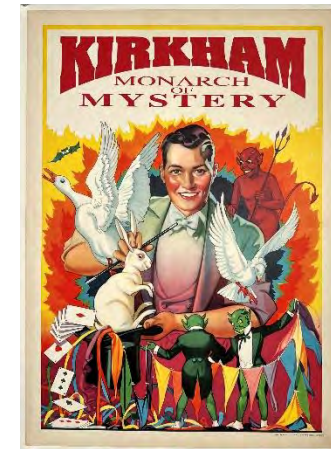
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113



114

LOT 103. SHAFFERS MUSICAL PARTY HERALD - TURN OF THE CENTURY HERALD ADVERTISING THE SHAFFER MUSICAL PARTY, LOUISE SHAFFER, MISS HALLIE HANSON, MABELL NARBIS, PROF. LEROY AND OTHERS. UNMOUNTED. 14.25"X42". 100-200

LOT 104. AL G. BARNES CIRCUS POSTER - PERSIA AND THE PAGEANT OF PEKIN SPECTACLE. ILLINOIS LITHO, C.1930'S. UNMOUNTED, MARGINS TRIMMED, ELSE VERY GOOD. 19"X26". 200-300

LOT 105. COLE BROS. CIRCUS POSTER - THE FAMOUS NELSON. DATE TAIL FOR NIAGARA FALLS, JUNE 3, 1944. UNMOUNTED, FOLD AS ISSUED, PINHOLES AT UPPER CORNERS, VERY GOOD. 27"X29". 200-300

LOT 106. AL G. BARNES FOUR-RING CIRCUS POSTER - FORTY FAMOUS FUNSTERS FURNISH FROLICS. ERIE LITHO, 1920'S. ONE SHEET, UNMOUNTED, FOLDS, TRIMMED MARGINS, EDGE TEARS. 26"X40". 300-500

LOT 107. DOWNIE BROS. BIG 3 RING CIRCUS POSTER - CLOWNS IN VARIOUS DISPLAYS. ERIE LITHO, 1930. ONE SHEET, UNMOUNTED, FOLDS, EDGE WEAR, TEARS. 28"X41.". 300-500

LOT 108. WALTER L. MAIN 3 RING TRAINED ANIMAL CIRCUS POSTER - PRESENTING THE GORGEOUS SPECTACLE "AMERICA". RIVERSIDE PRINTING, 1920'S. ONE SHEET, UNMOUNTED, EDGE TEARS, FOLDS AS ISSUED. 28"X42". 100-200

LOT 109. RINGLING BROS. AND BARNUM & BAILEY COMBINED CIRCUS POSTER - A BEAUTIFUL ANIMAL DISPLAY. ERIE LITHO, CHATTAHOOGA, SEPTEMBER 11, 1931. UNMOUNTED, EDGE TEARS, TEAR IN CENTER OF DATE TAIL, FOLDS, BRILLIANT COLORS. A GOOD CANDIDATE FOR RESTORATION. 27"X58.5". 200-300

LOT 110. RICE BROS. CIRCUS POSTER - MISS ATHLETA - ONE SHEET, ERIE LITHO, C.1935. UNMOUNTED, FOLDS, REMNANTS OF DATE TAIL, EDGE WEAR. 28"X41.5". 200-300

LOT 111. WALTER L. MAIN 3 RING TRAINED ANIMAL CIRCUS POSTER - PRESENTING THE GORGEOUS SPECTACLE "AMERICA". RIVERSIDE PRINTING, 1920'S. ONE SHEET, UNMOUNTED, EDGE TEARS, FOLDS AS ISSUED. 28"X42". 100-200

LOT 112. M.L. CLARK AND SON'S COMBINED SHOWS POSTER - C.1920'S. ONE SHEET, RIVERSIDE PRINTING. UNMOUNTED, TEARS, FOLDS, LOSS. 27.25"X41.5". 100-200

LOT 113. KIRKHAM MONARCH OF MYSTERY MAGIC POSTER - HALF SHEET, ERIE LITHO, C.1955. PROFESSIONALLY CONSERVED ON LINEN, 21"X29". 300-600

LOT 114. LEWIS BROS. BIG 3 RING CIRCUS POSTER - TITLE AND PRICING, C1940'S. CENTRAL SHOW PRINTING, HALF SHEET, PROFESSIONALLY CONSERVED, LINEN BACKED. 22.5"X30". 200-400



115



116



117



118

LOT 115. ELLEN & JULIUS - ZOO L-HAVE POSTER - MOTHER AND BABY ELEPHANT, COPENHAGEN ZOO, 1912. TO COMMEMORATE THE BIRTH OF JULIUS AT THE COPENHAGEN ZOO. ANDRESEN & LACHMAN, LIT. HALF SHEET. FRAMED, 24"X35". 200-400

LOT 116. GEO. FOOTIT - LE CELEBRE CLOWN POSTER - GEORGE FOOTIT - "THE FAMOUS CLOWN", C.1920. GEORGE FOOTIT (ENGLAND/FRANCE, 1864-1921). PROFESSIONALLY CONSERVED, LINEN BACKED, HALF SHEET, 21.25"X31.5". 300-600

LOT 117. ROYAL SCANDINAVIAN CIRCUS - HIPPODROME, DARLINGTON, BRITAIN, 1936. A POSTER WITH CLOWN AND LIBERTY HORSE DISPLAY WITH SHOW TITLE AND DAY/DATES. LINEN-BACKED. HALF SHEET, 21.5"X31.5". 200-400

LOT 118. STOCK POSTER - HALF SHEET, STAFFORD CO., NETHERFIELD, C.1920'S. PROFESSIONALLY CONSERVED, LINEN BACKED. 21.5"X31.5". 300-600

LOT 119. CIRCUS CARL ALTHOFF POSTER
DRUCK: SCHROPP'SCHE LEHRMITTELANSTALT KG. WIESBADEN-HUGSWEIER. PROFESSIONALLY CONSERVED, LINEN-BACKED, LARGE ONE SHEET, 37.25"X51". 300-600

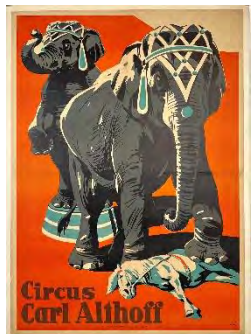
LOT 120. CIRCUS CARL ALTHOFF POSTER
DRUCK: SCHROPP'SCHE LEHRMITTELANSTALT KG. WIESBADEN-HUGSWEIER. PROFESSIONALLY CONSERVED, LINEN-BACKED, LARGE ONE SHEET, 35.75"X50". 300-600

LOT 121. CARL ALTHOFF POSTER - WITH LADY TRAINER AND LIONS. PROFESSIONALLY CONSERVED, LINEN-BACKED, LARGE TWO SHEET, 48"X67". 300-600

LOT 122. STOCK CIRCUS POSTER - TIGERS WITH TRAINER, STAR DESIGN BORDER. PROFESSIONALLY CONSERVED, LINEN-BACKED, TWO SHEET, 48"X67". 200-400



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120



121



122



123

CIRCUS LETTERHEADS

LOT 123. A RARE COLLECTION OF 19TH CENTURY LETTERHEAD. HEMMINGS, COOPER & WHITBY'S MENAGERIE & CIRCUS, C.1870. MONTGOMERY QUEEN'S MAMMOTH CIRCUS & MENAGERIE, C.1876. W.C. COUP'S, 1878. D.W. STONE'S GRAND CIRCUS & MUSICAL BRIGADE, C.1878. GREAT FOREPAUGH SHOW - C.1883. JOHN B. DORIS GREAT INTER-OCEAN SHOW, C.1883. BIG UNITED STATES CIRCUS & GREAT EASTERN MENAGERIE, C.1886. VAN AMBURGH NEW RAILROAD SHOWS, C.1886. 300-600

LOT 124. COLLECTION OF 25 EXAMPLES. AMERICAN CIRCUSES, 20TH CENTURY. 200-400

LOT 125. COLLECTION OF 25 EXAMPLES. AMERICAN CIRCUSES, 20TH CENTURY. 200-400

LOT 126. COLLECTION OF 25 EXAMPLES. AMERICAN CIRCUSES, 20TH CENTURY. 200-400

LOT 127. COLLECTION OF 35+ EXAMPLES. AMERICAN CIRCUSES, 20TH CENTURY. 200-400



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125



126



127



129

STROBRIDGE LITHOGRAPH CO. POSTER INDEX

INDEX CARDS COMPILED BY STROBRIDGE LITHOGRAPH CO. FOR IDENTIFICATION. CARDS ARE 5"X8" AND CONTAIN SHEET (POSTER) SIZE AND STOCK NUMBER, SOME WITH YEAR OF PRODUCTION. MANY MULTI-SHEET EXAMPLES MAY HAVE NOT BEEN SEEN BEFORE AS ULTRA-LARGE POSTINGS WERE DISCARDED AND NOT SAVED.

- LOT 128. BARNUM & BAILEY - PRE-1920. 200-400
- LOT 129. BARNUM & BAILEY - PRE-1920. 200-400
- LOT 130. RINGLING BROS. - PRE-1920. 200-400
- LOT 131. RINGLING BROS. - PRE-1920. 200-400
- LOT 132. RINGLING BROS. - PRE-1920. 200-400
- LOT 133. RINGLING BROS. - PRE-1920. 200-400



STROBRIDGE LITHO FOR BARNUM & BAILEY, 1917



128



130



131



132



133



133D



133A

LOT 133A. LOU JACOBS AUTOGRAPH - SIGNED IN GOLD INK ON PRINT. FRAMED, 12"X14". 100-200

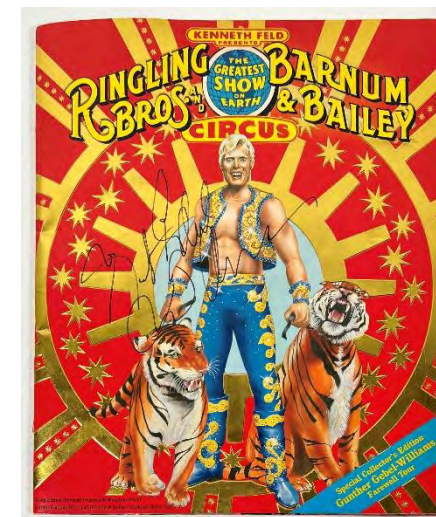
LOT 133B. FROSTY LITTLE AUTOGRAPH - SIGNED IN BLACK INK ON PHOTO. FRAMED, 12"X15". 100-200

LOT 133C. GUNTHER GEBEL WILLIAMS AUTOGRAPH DBL. AUTOGRAPH COVER/INTERIOR, IN BLACK INK. 100-200

LOT 133D. CLYDE AND HARRIETT BEATTY AUTOGRAPHS. FRAMED DISPLAY 10"X20.5". 100-200



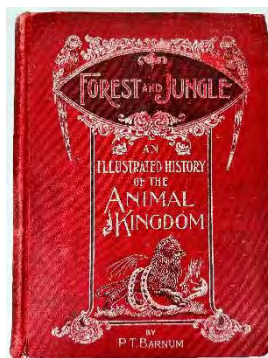
133B



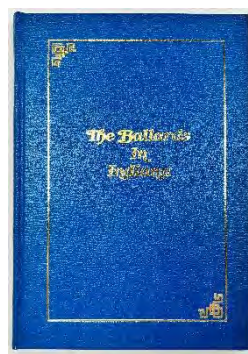
133C



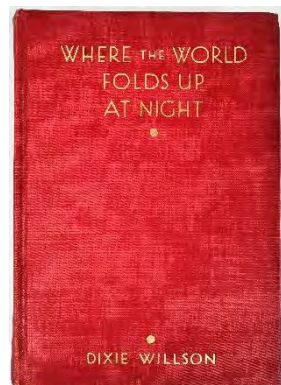
134



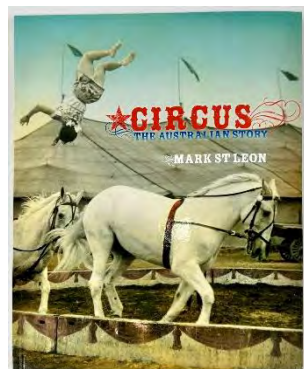
135



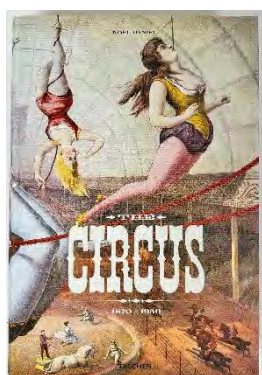
136



137



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139

LOT 134. DAMN EVERYTHING BUT THE CIRCUS – SISTER MARY CORITA KENT

SISTER MARY CORITA KENT (1918-1986). INCLUDES BOOK AND 29 SEPARATE ILLUSTRATIONS ON PAPER, BOOK SIGNED BY THE AUTHOR AND ARTIST. SCARCE TO FIND WITH SIGNATURE. 2,000-3,000

LOT 135. FOREST AND JUNGLE - P.T. BARNUM

AN ILLUSTRATED HISTORY OF THE ANIMAL KINGDOM. SECOND PRINTING, 1897. 502 PAGES WITH TEXT AND ILLUSTRATIONS. 200-400

LOT 136. THE BALLARDS IN INDIANA - CHARLES EDWARD BALLARD

A VERY SCARCE, NEW OLD STOCK EDITION COVERING THE LIFE OF ED BALLARD, ONE TIME OWNER OF THE HAGENBECK-WALLACE CIRCUS AND IMPORTANT CHARACTER IN THE CITY OF FRENCH LICK, INDIANA, WEST BADEN HOTEL. THE BOOK WAS WRITTEN AND PUBLISHED IN 1984 BY ED'S SON, CHAD, WHO WAS ORDERED TO WRITE THE BOOK AS PART OF A PLEA DEAL IN A RECKLESS HOMICIDE CONVICTION WHEREIN BALLARD'S FAILED SUICIDE ATTEMPT TOOK THE LIFE OF HIS WIFE, ALICIA BALLARD. 200-400

LOT 137. WHERE THE WORLD FOLDS UP AT NIGHT – DIXIE WILSON

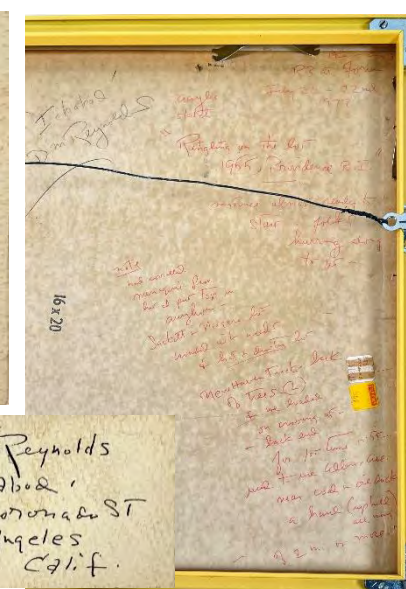
1932. CHRONICLE OF THE RBBB CIRCUS, WITH WHICH SHE PERFORMED FOR A BRIEF TIME. WILSON WAS FRIENDS AND LATER CARETAKER OF WIRE WALKING EXTRAORDINAIRE, BIRD MILLMAN. 100-200

LOT 138. CIRCUS - THE AUSTRALIAN STORY - MARK ST. LEON

2012. COMPREHENSIVE AND VISUALLY STUNNING HISTORY OF CIRCUS IN AUSTRALIA. 100-200

LOT 139. THE CIRCUS - TASCHEN

JUMBO EDITION. THE CIRCUS, 1870-1950, A SUPER-SIZED EDITION OF TASHEN'S CLASSIC. EDITED BY NOEL DANIEL, 2008. LINEN COVERS, OUTER BOX. 670 PAGES WITH TEXT. 12"X18"X3". 100-200



LOT 140. DYER REYNOLDS CIRCUS PAINTING - ORIGINAL DYER REYNOLDS (AMERICAN, 1930-1980) OIL ON ARTIST BOARD OF RINGLING BROS. AND BARNUM & BAILEY CIRCUS TITLED: "RINGLING ON THE LOT, 1955, PROVIDENCE, RHODE ISLAND". REYNOLDS WORKED THE BIG SHOW AND WAS KNOWN FOR HIS "FROM MEMORY" PAINTINGS, MANY OF WHICH BEAR HAND-WRITTEN NOTES ON THE STRETCHER FRAME ABOUT HIS RECOLLECTIONS. INCLUDES HAND-DRAWN BUSINESS CARD BY REYNOLDS. NOTES ON VERSO. FRAMED. OVERALL 19"X22", SIGHT 11"X13".

Dyer Myron Reynolds was a painter, photographer, and model builder born in Rhode Island, the son of Geraldine (b. 1911) and Dyer Reynolds Sr. (b. 1906). His father worked as a cleaner. As a young boy, Reynolds and his family resided at 176 Hazel Street in Lincoln, Providence County, Rhode Island. From an early age, Reynolds felt the need to help his parents who were never wealthy, but due to severe asthma, he could not do very much. Having an artistic bent and being highly interested in the circus, he began modeling different circus animals in miniature out of clay and then finishing them with paint. He also recreated circus wagons, cages, and vehicles in miniature, advertising in circus related publications at the age of eighteen that he modeled "all types of circus wagons and animals for fans" and "If you know of some fan who would like a wagon in real scale or a clown about four inches tall, please refer them to me." His works became even better known when they were noted for their quality and detail in the magazine Popular Mechanics. Around this time Dyer also began collecting circus memorabilia, which would become a lifelong passion. As he got older, Reynolds began traveling in the northeast part of the country visiting as many different varieties of circus as possible. The publication Hobby-Bandwagon -The Circusiana Monthly noted that during the summer of 1949, Reynolds "caught the RB&BB circus for three days at Providence, R. I. and enjoyed a meal in the Hotel Ringling and visited with many of the "top" performers. Dyer also caught RB&BB at Springfield and Boston, Mass., Biller Bros, and Hunt Bros." At the time, Reynolds was residing at 197 East Avenue, Pawtucket, Rhode Island. He finally achieved his dream job of working in a circus by 1951, when he was working in the "Light Department" of the Ringling Brothers and Barnum & Bailey Circus combined show. That year he began advertising "exclusive" circus photographs for sale that he had taken at the "RB&BB quarters" which were available in both color and black & white. He continued to take photographs that documented circus life during the period, and which are today treasured by many circus collectors and enthusiasts. He also collected 16mm films that documented performances and sound recordings that documented original circus musical scores. Eventually, Reynolds joined the "Circus Model Builders" association, where he helped other builders with his original research into the details of the various wagons, carts, railroad cars, etc., used by the circuses during the mid-twentieth century. Reynolds channeled his experiences FROM his circus days not only into his models but also into original paintings he created, both in watercolor and oil, which depicted clowns, views of the big top, and typical circus grounds, while always focusing on capturing a real sense of circus life. Many of these were recreated FROM memory, as he noted on the backs of some of his paintings. Within the circus community he became known by the nickname "Ichabod," though it is unclear why. By 1980, Reynolds was living in Los Angeles, California where he was suffering FROM ill health. He noted in The Circus Report that April that he would soon have to "hang it all up." In August he announced that he had been donating his large circus collection to Memphis State University, where he expected it to be exhibited shortly. Dyer Myron Reynolds died in California, on Wednesday, the 22nd of October 1980 at the age of fifty. The Circus Report noted that "he was an avid collector and artist throughout his life." In 1982 Memphis State University published a book on his important collection of circus memorabilia. His works are held in the collection of the following public collections/institutions: Dyer Reynolds Circus Collection, Memphis State University, Memphis, Tennessee; John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art, Sarasota, Florida; Richard and Albert Conover Collection, Circus Historical Society, Inc. His works also reside in private collections throughout the United States. (ASKART) 300-600

NOTES



LOT 141. RBBB CIRCUS MOUNDSVILLE

ORIGINAL DATE POSTER FOR MOUNDSVILLE, WEST VIRGINIA, JULY 17TH, 1956. THIS DATE WAS POSTED BUT NEVER PLAYED AS THE FINAL RINGLING BROS. AND BARNUM & BAILEY CIRCUS PERFORMANCE UNDER THE BIG TOP WAS HELD THE PREVIOUS DAY. THE CANVAS CAME DOWN FOR GOOD ON JULY 16, 1956, WITH THE SHOW PLAYING BUILDINGS IN THE YEARS THAT FOLLOWED. PROFESSIONALLY FRAMED AND MATTED. OBTAINING WRITING, "SHOW CLOSED JULY 16TH, A DATE NEVER MADE, 1956". 200-400

About the Auction...

Additional and more thorough information pertaining to the lots in this catalog are available on request and also via our websites www.circusauctions.com and www.freedomauctions.com. Terms and conditions of the auction sale are posted at time of in-person or online registration.

Freedom Auction Company would like to especially thank those who provided support in the creation of this catalog: Wyatt Hollifield, Evan Raber, Tibbals Learning Center – Ringling Museum, Circus World Museum, Sarasota Historical Society, Circus Historical Society, The Hobson Family, Brian and Karen Peters, Chris Berry, Fred Pfening, David Rosaire, Pedro Reis, Lee Stevens, Susie Turner, Bonnie Seidon, James McCormick.

In all of this, we say once again, "What is most special are the people...not the stuff".

Please visit our websites for up-to-date information about upcoming auctions. We are always seeking quality collections. One piece or many, if you have items you wish to sell, please contact us at 941.725.2166 or info@freedomauctions.com.



The Greatest Tent-Maker on Earth – The William Hobson Story

By Brian Hollifield

“Their names are for the most part unknown; the things they do lost in the general oblivion of all teamwork.”

– Through the Back Door of the Circus with George Brinton Beal

Successful sailing requires its captain to hoist a canvas panel up the towering mast. A successful circus in the golden age - showing town-to-town - must also raise its canvas among a series of masts. To do so, both needed a sailmaker’s craftsmanship to provide the apparatus of movement.

Canvas.

In preparation for this article, the author polled a who’s who list of circus historians, asking if they had ever heard of the “World’s Greatest Tent-Maker.” Nearly all responses were, “Who is William Hobson?”(1) Hobson had been billed as the world’s leading tent-maker, the Dean of Tent-Makers, Cap’n Bill, and many other titles to signify his importance.(2) For over a decade, spanning the years 1928-1939, he was responsible for building the world’s largest big top, a structure that spanned one-hundred-ninety-four feet by four-hundred-ninety feet. It was more than ninety-five-thousand square feet, standing over five stories high with capacity for over fourteen-thousand fun-seekers.

“The World’s Greatest” was not only responsible for overseeing the stitch-by-stich process but also hand-drawing the designs according to the needs of the show. “The Dean” worked twelve months every year, re-designing, repairing, overhauling, and starting anew; outfitting *The Greatest Show on Earth* with a new dress each and every spring. The sanctuary in the greatest canvas city on earth was its big top, a cathedral constructed of eighteen sections of carefully sheared and sewn eight-ounce twill canvas, with each section weighing over fifteen-hundred pounds, supported by two-hundred-two poles, including six giant poles manufactured by a ship mast manufacturer in the Northwestern United States.(3) There were forty-two miles of rope among the thirty-one tents on the Ringling-Barnum show, so much so that if all the rope were placed into a single coil, it would reach the top of the Empire State Building. Samuel Gumpertz, the Ringling-Barnum Boss who celebrated his golden anniversary in show business in 1936, once stated in addition to the thousands of yards of canvas on the lot, the show carried twice that in reserve at home. “Cap’n Bill” was running the ship at the Sail Loft, Ringling’s tent manufacturing plant, where the great billowy circus tents of summertime were constructed. (4)

A recent acquisition, coming to auction in August 2024, has now been billed as the one of the greatest discoveries in nearly a century of circus history and scholarship. To borrow from David Carlyon on Dan Rice, William Hobson is most likely the greatest tentmaker you have never heard of. For eighty-five years, the Hobson family was custodian of a collection of diaries, work logs, expense records and circus tent architecture.

Among the newly uncovered trove of circus gold is *The Hobson Scroll*, a treasured architectural rendering of every Ringling-Barnum top on the show circa 1928. Skill in tent-making proved a critical component for a period in circus history and William Hobson was a genius. His meticulous hand-written record provides an insightful and previously unknown documentation of the greatest canvas city on earth. (5)

The Hobson story tells of a man remembered first as a person and second for his tent-making. Described as a small, white-haired Englishman, he was soft-spoken and mild-mannered, and with canvas in his blood, his intense pride in his work was his most notable characteristic. (6) Not only a tentmaker, but William was also equally talented in juggling all of his responsibilities, excelling in his trade, yet finding the time necessary to spend with his young family. William was meticulous with his diaries, both work and home. His hobbies included gathering shells at the beach, fishing, attending the theatre, and sunset driving in his beloved Ford—recording the purchase of every drop of fuel ever put in the tank. (7)

He was proud of his children, always recording each of their accomplishments. Known to their children as Papa and Mama, William and Anna never went anywhere together without taking all the children along. Anna oversaw the home, hiring out any odd job that might ever be needed as William was bullish with off time, choosing to spend it in leisure with his family. On occasion, William would take his children along to work, leaving them in the wardrobe department to play among the costumes and clown outfits. The siblings would play hide and seek among the mountains of twill canvas and would often spend time wandering around animal cages. (8) He was described in a family journal as always providing excellent care, amusements, and an abundance of love. (9) He wrote daily to older children away at college or work. Because Hobson’s role required him anchoring in Sarasota, he did not venture out to see the show except when it came home to Sarasota and surrounding towns. On those occasions the family always had the best seats in the big top and were always treated as royalty. William Hobson was King of Canvas and he earned it, learning the trade from generations of family before him. (10)

Launching from England, *The Queen* arrived at Ellis Island, New York, April 17, 1880, carrying two passengers who hoped, like many, to make a go of it in the United States. Matthew Hobson and his wife Maria arrived in America, and within a brief time settled in Covington, Kentucky, just across the Ohio River from Cincinnati. The Hobson family had long been associated with work in the nautical fields of sail making and rigging and this area of the Ohio River, which was known as a canvas hotbed, seemed like a perfect place to settle. In fact, Matthew’s father, who

was taken in by his maternal aunt and uncle, carried the surnames of Gallienne and Roper, which hint to a lineage of maritime heritage. (11)

William Matthew Hobson was born in Covington, Kentucky in 1884. Despite the family lineage of canvas culture, William became the only one of six siblings with success in the field. In 1910, William and his father were partners in Hobson & Meyer, a Cincinnati area firm that focused on small tent and awning work. Soon thereafter, William left to form Hobson & Fliszik where he performed drafting and design work and sold specialized tent design plans. In mail order campaigns, the firm sold blueprints at five dollars per copy, and clients could choose from ten different tent sizes from nineteen-by-twenty-eight feet, up to a fifty-by-eighty-foot round top. (12) During his tenure with the firm, William was introduced to Anna Fliszik and the two married on August 28, 1912. While on their honeymoon the happy couple visited circus grounds where they were photographed with a tent in the background. (13)

William's World War I draft card placed him in the tent-making trade with John Scherz & Sons Leather and Canvas in nearby Hamilton, Ohio, followed by employment as foreman for an Awning Company in Cincinnati. In 1925 the family moved across the Ohio River to Newport, Kentucky, but when the Ohio River spilled over its banks and flooded their home, William decided there was a better way of life than struggling with annual flooding. He moved the family south to Albany, Georgia and a year later to Savannah, where William organized and directed both the Albany and Savannah Tent and Awning Companies. (14) The Hobson family's time in Georgia was short-lived as Hobson was becoming well known in the tent-world and his work was being sought-after by those in need of tents.

A head-hunter was coming for William Hobson and that man was John Ringling.

Rejuvenescence. That was the mantra for Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey in 1939. A streamlined and redesigned tent interior brought décor to the inside of the big top. (15) Just over a decade earlier, another form of rejuvenescence took place when the circus world was rocked by the move of the combined shows from its longtime home in Bridgeport in 1927. Gone were the confined and fire-prone Connecticut winter quarters, a postage-stamp-sized lot where canvas work was unheard of. The new Sarasota winter quarters would not only become a tourist destination but would also provide the space and resources for the show to produce its own canvas tops. For this task, Ringling needed a man at the helm who could produce whatever the show needed.

Hobson was hired by John Ringling as part of the relocation of the circus. While still in Georgia, William left his family for a visit to Bridgeport where he assessed the canvas needs of the show and began a logbook that would later document over a decade of work related to circus tent construction. Over that time, the journal titled "1928 Outfit - Ringling Show" covered work progress, tent sketches, specifications, pricing and more. He would also develop a separate Ringling book containing an index of tents with drawings. (16)

When the show left its Bridgeport quarters for the new Sarasota home in May 1927, William Hobson was with it, moving into a home just east of the Tamiami Trail at 319 9th Street. In 1929, the family reunited in Sarasota and William continued the daily tasks of managing production in what was known as the sail loft. (17)

The largest building on Sarasota winter quarters, nearly a football field in length, housed three departments. The menagerie and a big catwalk were on the ground level with the sail loft above it on the second floor. The sail loft was a large two-story open room lined with workbenches and tools of the trade, with a perimeter mezzanine overlooking the workspace that served as storage for the wardrobe department.

The work area included an enormous work bench, over one-hundred-fifteen-feet in length, which provided the space needed for the team to cut large sections of canvas. (18) As William assessed the show's canvas requirements for 1928, he needed to gain a full understanding of the largest canvas city on earth.

An exacting draftsman, William acquired a large roll of butcher paper and with his compass, protractors and rulers he took graphite to paper, and along the expansive cutting bench in the sail loft he created one continuous drawing nearly one hundred feet in length. The plan detailed all the canvas structures designed to occupy an ideal seventeen-acre parcel of land that could be found anywhere on tour.

This record, now recognized as *The Hobson Scroll*, was kept for years in a specially made metal tube that was locked away, and prior to 1939, only unrolled a few times for reference. During the 1930's, the story of *The Hobson Scroll* was written about in multiple publications including the 1936 Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey *Magazine and Daily Review*, a 1937 issue of *Popular Science*, and finally in Hobson's obituary in the *St. Petersburg Times*.

Through this unique document Hobson developed an official architectural record of the canvas that was created for *The Greatest Show on Earth*, and during the decade that followed, he supervised the construction of the largest and best quality tents ever built. (19)

Not long after Hobson began working on the scroll John Ringling again stunned the circus world with the purchase of the American Circus Corporation.

Ringling's gamble on moving the circus to Sarasota had already proven successful, as more than sixty-five-thousand visitors toured the winter quarters from the time it opened on Christmas Day 1927 through March 28, 1928, the day the show left Sarasota for the opening at New York's Madison Square Garden. (20)

Sarasota's association with the circus had brought national attention to the town, and at a time when the nearby city of Bradenton flirted with the John Robinson Circus, in hopes that it would relocate from Indiana to Florida, Ringling reduced the field of competitors by purchasing the American Circus Corporation and its five shows.(21) With its huge tent-making shop,

Ringling-Barnum – and William Hobson – was now able to manufacture all of the canvas required by Sells-Floto, Sparks, Hagenbeck-Wallace, Al G. Barnes and John Robinson Circuses. Although the shows would all eventually close or combine, in the winter of 1929-30, Hobson was tasked with documenting the canvas needs for all of John Ringling’s circuses and the monumental chore of crafting the Ringling tops. (22)

Although it was reported that the tents were refurbished in the winter off-season, Hobson’s work log details activity in the sail loft that continued year-round. (23) The workdays were nine and a half hours Monday through Friday, and five hours on Saturday. While contemporary reports state that a crew of thirty-six labored in the sail loft, Hobson’s records describe an average of six to eight men fabricating the canvas with two to four women working the sewing machines. (24)

Superintendent Hobson’s inaugural class of new hires include Mrs. Corene Johnson McElreath, Mrs. Anna Miller, Edward Godfrey, Ralph Harding, Mike Murphy, Frank Robertson, Howard Dial, Paul Hutchinson and Willie Rew. According to a Ringling Show office ledger, the crew received their first payroll on December 22, 1927. (24-2) Most of these workers continued under Hobson’s eye throughout his tenure. The log also explained that all tents constructed during the current year were completed for the season that followed. (25)

During most seasons, work on the following year’s big top would begin after the show left winter quarters, with the small jobs happening during the hustle and bustle of winter in the quarters. For example, on June 7, 1929, work began on the 1930 big top and was completed on September 19. (26) The big top that year was made in eighteen sections, each laced together on the show lot. The process involved the cutting and shaping of the canvas, then the pieces were joined by a double-needle sewing machine, moving next to a single needle machine where the joined strips were reinforced. (27)

Moving from the bench to sewing machine, and then the floor, where men —hand-spliced and wove ropes into sections and installed hardware, rings and thimbles for pole support. Beeswax was used to waterproof the cording. In 1953 the extensive cording would be replaced with steel wire. (28) After each big top was complete it was taken onto winter quarters grounds to be to be water-proofed according to Hobson’s recipe, which applied a ratio of 125 gallons of gasoline to one-half barrel of paraffin wax per 1,800 yards of eight-ounce twill canvas. Some tents were never fully erected prior to loading the canvas bundles on the train in the spring. The Menagerie tent, which was 110 feet by 305 feet, took just over sixty calendar days to complete, while the dining tent that spanned 55 by 212 feet, took a total of thirteen calendar days. (29)

In 1930, the private tents of Lillian Leitzel and John Ringling were the only two structures designed with side windows. The same tent design was later recreated for Tim McCoy’s appearance with the show in 1935. (30) In 1930, Hobson was also tasked with creating and refurbishing the Al G. Barnes big top along with side work on the other affiliated shows. During this time, Hobson kept detailed records of who was doing what, how long it took to complete the

job, what materials were being used and how much is cost. As small work was completed, it was often shipped to the show while it was en-route. (31)

In October 1931, Hobson wrote a letter to his oldest daughter of happenings at work that day. “With the show in, wagons are being moved around and unloaded and the railings in the loft storage are covered with brightly colored wardrobe. With lions and tigers hollering their heads off, manager Mr. [Carl] Hathaway is in a hundred places at once. Minnie and John, a pair of orangutans, visit the sail loft and get into everything, rolling around in mounds of canvas and investigating all things around them. The Bandleader, Merle Evans, was there all morning, going through his trunks full of music.” Hobson met with Mr. Hathaway, and after having seen the show just days before, he tells Hathaway that he dislikes some of the acts and has a mind to change them. In post-script, Hobson writes, “Honest tho, Pat Valdo wants us to get together some-night and see if we can plan some-thing new.” The letter is signed, “Love and Kisses – Papa.” (32)

In 1933, Hobson and Hathaway, developed a square big top concept with four corner poles, which would allow better visibility for patrons and the ability to guy-out the four poles away from the tent, creating a more robust structure. (33)

The four-pole concept opened the floor to a newly designed crisscross five-ring performance space with the option of four stages. Hobson drafted the plan, drew a rendering, and penned a draft and final letter of support. Later documentation reveals that a Washington D.C. attorney was given the application but was waiting on the right time for submittal so the “idea wasn’t laying around to be stolen.” (34) A search of U.S. Patent applications did not reveal successful patents for Hobson and Hathaway during their lifetimes. In 1942, a big top of the future with no interior poles was designed by Norman Bel Geddes but the concept is later scratched by John Ringling North over other priorities. (35)

In the mid-1930s, after John Ringling lost control of his circus to Samuel Gumpertz, the new Vice President and General Manager also took over operations at winter quarters. When Hobson’s new boss invited longtime supplier Baker & Lockwood on premise to offer a cost-savings bid to construct the Al G. Barnes big top, The vendor offered to complete the work at cost of materials only, in hopes of earning a long-term relationship with Gumpertz. Baker & Lockwood were on Hobson’s turf, and the savings were nearly one-third the cost of a Hobson contract. (36)

In the spring of 1933, Gumpertz, who called Hobson “Bill,” told the sailmaker he would make arrangements for him to receive payroll each summer but to keep it as low as possible and to watch his step. In his journal Hobson scoffed, calling the exchange “the same old bologna.” When Gumpertz requested a specially designed shelter over his private quarters, Hobson was reluctant but acknowledged he must do the work if he wants to eat. (37)

Hobson, Hathaway, and Gumpertz were together in winter quarters when a fresh coat of aluminum paint was applied to the railroad flats, and although the trio admired the glistening cars, Hobson later recorded that both he and Hathaway remarked that the color choice was not wise as

the cinder and smoke of the locomotive would surely reduce their glimmer. When Hobson was asked to build a canvas shelter for the newly painted flats, he again scoffed at Gumpertz, telling him he might as well put a roof over the entire winter quarters. The idea was scrapped. (38)

The trio continued to argue over the red title painted on the car sides. While Gumpertz liked the word *show*, Hathaway and Hobson claimed that leaving the word *circus* out of the title was like wasting a million dollars. Hathaway confided to Hobson that he did not like Gumpertz's new-fangled ideas. Hobson later recorded that he had better results with Gumpertz when he stood up to him. Hobson suspected that Gumpertz was trying to ruin the show so that he might acquire it later for a good price and wrote that he was surprised John Ringling had not stepped back in. (39)

Hobson was disgusted when he found out the show did not pay its bill for materials during the winter of 1934 and '35. The blacksmiths and electricians were not paid until the show left Boston for Brooklyn, and he was certain that Gumpertz was going to ruin the reputation of the business. In a diary recording, Hobson wrote, "Curse Gumpertz and all his grasping, selfish kind. Everything was okay until he entered the picture." (40)

Over the next several years William cranked out his assignments on a regimented schedule. (41) In 1935, he hired a twenty-seven-year-old assistant, Leif Osmundsen, recorded by an entry in Hobson's diary, "Leif began work on April 18, 1935, at 9 a.m." Leif, from Stavengar, Norway, began working under his Uncle Osman Osmundsen when he was only fourteen. The two had worked together with J.D. Aulridge at Beverly Tent and Awning in Louisville years before, and were now reunited under the Ringling banner. For the next twenty-one years Leif and his uncle, along with two female machine operators hired by Hobson, continued working in the tent shop until canvas was no longer needed after the 1956 tour. (42)

The 1936 Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Route Book listed Wm. Hobson - Superintendent, Tent Making Department. Although there were only about ten working in the shop, it took over 335 men supervised by veteran canvas boss Jim Whalen to erect all the tops on the show grounds.

The winter of 1936 was notable in that the ownership of the Hunt Bros. Circus and others visited the Sarasota sail loft, and there was no doubt discussions of cherry pie, a bit of extra side work that Hobson could produce under the Ringling rooftops.(43) As new tents were assembled, old canvas was discarded, sold to Benny Jacobson who bought the worn-out canvas to be recycled as rags. Royal Palm Nurseries in nearby Oneco, and G.W. Wetherel in White Sulpher Springs, Montana were also among those who received shipments of old canvas from Hobson. Ringling salvage canvas was claimed by tin-can-tourists and touring evangelists. On some occasions, William spent entire days selling canvas by the pound. A woman who was shorted cents on her purchase, drove miles returning to winter quarters to reconcile, and Hobson was amused that the woman "burned a quarter in gas for a nickel refund." (44)

Not only a tentmaker, but Hobson also took on the unintended role of winter quarters general manager. Although never officially given the title, he recorded days of giving assistance with new hire paperwork, including orientation of the night watchman. Hobson was also given the task of feeding a hippopotamus that was kept in the pen beneath a window of the sail loft. The hippopotamus dined on oats, molasses and hay under the strict feeding frequency orders given by the caretaker. (45)

Although William enjoyed the quiet that came with the show leaving winter quarters each spring, he also enjoyed taking photographs, and with his Eastman Kodak Brownie camera, he captured scenes of the busy winter quarters from his quiet perspective within the sail loft. (46)

Hobson received regular payroll from the show, money that was deposited into his and Anna's personal account at Palmer Bank, and distributed weekly to his employees in the loft.(47) William was the highest paid, and he inadvertently discovered a payroll slip in the business office revealing that he earned as much as the circus treasurer and nearly twenty-five percent more than the show's doctor.(48)

By May 1937, the circus was back on the road and winter quarters was quiet. (49) Hobson noted there was a discussion that George Smith, general manager of the circus at that time, was involved in union negotiations with The American Federation of Actors (AFA) for Employees of Ringling Bros. Barnum & Bailey Combined Circus. After a new five-year agreement was negotiated a "Good News" letter was sent to Hobson outlining the contract. The new agreement provided a raise of one dollar a day for those earning more than sixty dollars per month, and those who earned less than sixty dollars would have their wages increased to the new scale. Workers were encouraged to keep up with their dues of twelve dollars per year in order to maintain their Worker's Compensation Insurance, transportation, meals and medical care. The newsletter stated that Samuel Gumpertz had done his very best to make his employees happy, yet Hobson held out for more, writing a letter requesting even higher wages for those working in the sail loft. On June 24, Gumpertz replied to Hobson, reminding him that the canvas shop workers were working fifty-two weeks a year, whereas those traveling with the show were only guaranteed seven months of pay at seven to eight dollars per week. As a result of Hobson's query, Gumpertz requested a list of Hobson's employees and their salaries and promised to investigate. After the review Hobson noted in his diary that on July 9, Gumpertz granted the raise. (50)

Hobson shared the good news, and the employees of the canvas shop collectively signed a letter of gratitude to Gumpertz. For the remainder of 1937 work continued with business as usual, however, there was a storm building, and the 1938 and 1939 seasons proved tumultuous for Hobson and the circus. (51)

In early November 1937, John and Henry Ringling North took control of show management and asked Hobson to build a new private dining tent for the coming season. (52) The sail loft was getting good publicity, and the Ringling vendors were taking notice. Plymouth Cordage Company was endorsed by William Hobson in advertising with the quote, "We use

Plymouth exclusively on our Big Top and on every other tent in the outfit – for we must have rope that we can feel safe in using. Good Old Plymouth has stood the test for years.” (53)

About the same time, The West Point Manufacturing Company started branding its product “Sarasota Special Brand Circus Twills,” and in March 1938, the canvas shop stenciled the phrase on the sidewalls of the big top. (54) There was a new attraction in winter quarters that year, and Hobson referred to Gargantua the Great as “The Big Gorilla.” Ignoring a warning from the keeper to stay back from the cage John Ringling North was nearly mauled by the beast, and at one point that winter, Hobson met briefly with Gargantua’s handler, Richard Kroner, to discuss a new Gorilla tent, but the idea was canned when the specially designed climate-controlled twenty-foot wagon was tasked to the Carrier Corporation.(55) The wagon was as celebrated as the animal and was paraded on the show. As the circus left Sarasota for Madison Square Garden, longtime Canvas Boss Jim Whalen was sick and stayed behind, departing by train to Baraboo on June 19. (56) James “Frenchy” Healy was then appointed canvas manager and, in an Edward J. Kelty photograph of the canvas department on May 1, 1938, in Newark, New Jersey he appeared front and center next to layout and twenty-four-hour man, Leonard Aylesworth.

A labor strike was looming as the 1938 season got underway, and Hobson first mentioned the unrest in his journals that April when he described the labor issues being settled in New York. By the middle of May, however, trouble was brewing when the show was under canvas in Brooklyn. On June 1, William reported that funding for the monthly payroll had not arrived, and he described the operation as being “in a bad fix.” A few days after he finally received the money, the show closed in Scranton, Pennsylvania. Hobson described the strike on June 23 as being the end of the tent shop if the show returned home. With the show stalled in Scranton, the big top canvas was laid out to dry following a bad storm. Circusmen told of a hazard that could develop when the sun beat down on tightly bundled wet canvas treated with paraffin, a flammable combination that had the potential for spontaneous combustion. (57) On June 28, the show left Scranton for home, arriving in Sarasota on July 1. The lack of box office revenue extended to winter quarters where the tent shop was forced to cut its weekly schedule from forty hours, plus overtime, to thirty-three hours and eventually to twenty. (58)

By Independence Day, featured acts from the Ringling-Barnum show were on their way to join the Al G. Barnes and Sells-Floto Combined Circus in Redfield, South Dakota, where the newly formed operation opened July 11. Hobson recorded a train that left Sarasota that was made up of twenty-one cars, including fourteen flats with five sleepers and two private cars and a host of working men. (59)

After three weeks of being laid out to pasture, the big top, which had been soaked in Pennsylvania rain and mud, combined with Florida tropical showers, was finally dry, repaired, and folded. By late summer, Hobson and his crew would typically have already begun working on the new tops, and although management had not communicated plans for 1939, an order of ninety-nine coils of Plymouth Rope arrived at the sail loft. (60)

The future of the circus was still unknown in the summer of 1938, uncertainty that was reinforced by a letter from general manager George Smith who wrote to Hobson on August 8 telling him not to start production of the big top. When the train rolled into Tampa that November, Hobson attended the show, hoping for some word on what was ahead in 1939. (61)

With the sail loft idle, Hobson was now spending more time at home, likely worrying about his future. A visit with “Mr. North” (the diary does not specify whether it was John or Henry Ringling North) revealed that some tops might not be used the next year.

The unsettling meeting with North prompted Hobson to record, “Business looks bad for the tent shop future.” As a precaution Hobson ordered one-thousand letterhead that advertised his mail order tent plan products as he began thinking of working Friday and Saturday nights to recover lost wages. (62)

It was not until shortly before Christmas, on December 16, 1938, that Hobson was given the green light for the new season. On that day and on the same one-hundred-fifteen-foot-long work bench where a decade earlier he first drafted *The Hobson Scroll*, William took shears in hand and began cutting the ends of the new big top. (63)

The diary entry from January 1, 1939, reads, “I wonder what this year will bring.” The next day, he and Anna sent out the first batch of letters advertising their mail order tent blueprints. (64) For Hobson there was concern over the status of the Ringling show in general, let alone the tent shop. There was an incredible amount of work ahead of him and his crew, and all of it had to be completed on a part-time basis of only twenty hours a week. Hobson wrote, “We will never get the Big Top done this way.” He believed it would be a miracle if they completed the work. (65)

Part of the challenge was the innovative new big top design for 1939. Changes included both comfort and style with the introduction of climate control and color designs in the twill that would enhance interior lighting during matinee performances through the addition of spotlights.

After a blue paste experiment failure, Hobson began exploring options with his canvas vendor, West Point Manufacturing Company. In a letter in the fall of 1938 to R.W. Jennings, a representative of West Point, Hobson asked if a tent dyed in solid blue would weaken the twill and if the waterproofing process of gasoline and paraffin would dilute the dye or shrink the material. (66)

The new design included a template of star patterns that would dot the canvas sky and the big top’s dress would be trimmed in blue for the new season. The 1939 tent would also feature air-conditioning, an innovation that required eight wagon-mounted units that pushed three hundred thousand cubic feet of ice-washed air into the world’s largest big top. Each of the wagons had two ducts that pushed the cool air into the enormous tent at sixteen strategic locations. (67)

The sail makers did not get into full swing until February 1, when Hobson was given permission for full time hours. On top of the shortened prep-season, Hobson had the new

responsibility of crafting star patterns and canvas funnels that would connect the ductwork to the new air conditioning system. A new reserved box section was also implemented, and in an effort to maintain the Hippodrome track configuration, the size of the tent was expanded. The new design elements put additional strain on an over-stressed workshop, and Hobson was soon deep in the weeds, claiming his head was going like a buzz-saw being so busy with eleventh-hour jobs. With an illness going around the loft, coupled with sewing machine breakage in February and March, he wrote, “May have to work overtime, not much time left to make the Big Top.” (68)

Hobson was right. There was not very much time left for the big top, or for William Hobson.

On March 29, 1939, the circus left Sarasota, bound for New York as work continued on the new big top. Despite the feverish pace there was still much to do. William used his journal to record his concerns over waterproofing and painting the canvas, as well as the challenge of the air conditioning funnels that had yet to be sewn into the top.

To properly place the funnels into the canvas, The big top needed to be laid out in the field. As he and his crew worked day after day cutting and sewing in the hot Florida sun Hobson complained about terrible sunburns, yet the work continued. (69) On April 15, the job was completed and photographs, presumably taken by Hobson, captured men inspecting its star spangled interior as the pristine top was raised on the winter quarters property. (70)

In his recollection of that day William recorded the following, “The Stars and Blue look good – hope the paint stays on,” and later he wrote, “It looks ok.” In the days that followed, the marquee and inside entry curtains were fabricated. As soon as work was completed on the big top, the shop was ordered to construct a boat cover for “Mrs. Ringling” and load the big top canvas for its first appearance in Long Island City, across the East River from Manhattan on May 8. (71)

For years, William Hobson kept a meticulous log of both work and personal activity. It seemed unusual that on May 26, 1939, his diaries and logs would be left blank. The entries were void in the following days as well. On Thursday, May 25, while the air-conditioned big top was set up in Philadelphia, William spent his workday focused on the dining tent fabrication. There was heavy rain that afternoon, and after a sunset ride in his beloved Ford, William returned home and suffered a coronary thrombosis, a heart attack. At the age of 54, William Hobson, master tentmaker for the Greatest Show on Earth, was dead.

As his daughter Alice wrote in her autobiography, “My father died very suddenly from fatigue brought on by several months of long overtime hours. He had never been sick, and the suddenness was hard for us all to accept. He had always told us that nobody was indispensable, but after his death, the Ringlings hired four men to replace him.” (72)

Pallbearers were all members of the tent department including Hobson’s immediate and future replacements, Ralph Harding and Leif Osmundson, as well as Willie Rew, the original sail

loft employee from Hobson’s first crew. The world’s finest tent maker was laid to rest in Manasota Memorial Park in Bradenton, Florida. (73)

For William Hobson, his unfortunate passing occurred following many months of uncertainty and wonder. It is easy to speculate that he died because of the pressure associated with his assignment by the circus, but one can never know. Hobson had finished the nearly impossible task of completing a redesigned big top in one of the shortest timeframes he had been given over the previous decade. For those who study circus history Hobson’s name has been right under their nose. The discovery of his collection of artifacts will now forever re-write the books on who created the canvas that defined Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus during what many consider the Golden Era.

The Billboard described the summer of 1939 in Winter Quarters as completely deserted, and it is no wonder why. One can only imagine the shock and sadness felt by the sail loft. It had lost its Captain and with so many uncertainties that year, there was no telling what was in store for 1940. When the show returned to Sarasota after its final performance in Tampa, the tent department went into action under newly promoted sail loft veteran Ralph Harding.

Just a few days before his passing William wrote to Layout Superintendent Leonard Aylesworth and discussed an order to modify the seat end curtains to adapt to the new reserved box seats. In the letter, Hobson expressed well-wishes that the show do good business and encouraged Leonard to not work too hard.

Leonard’s undated reply told of incidents on the show. Leonard’s nickname for the new air-conditioned unit was “The Headache,” and he explained that almost everything about it needed to be changed. Motors powering the unit were incorrect and needed to be re-worked. He also described how the first time the canvas was pulled, an elbow at the union of William’s canvas funnel and the air-conditioning duct fell into the seats when a drawstring failed. From then on, they were fastened with wire. Aylesworth reported that overall, the top was pulling well, and it looked good. There were no entries in the work log noting the seat end curtains job and it is assumed that Hobson never heard of the positive feedback from his labor. (74)

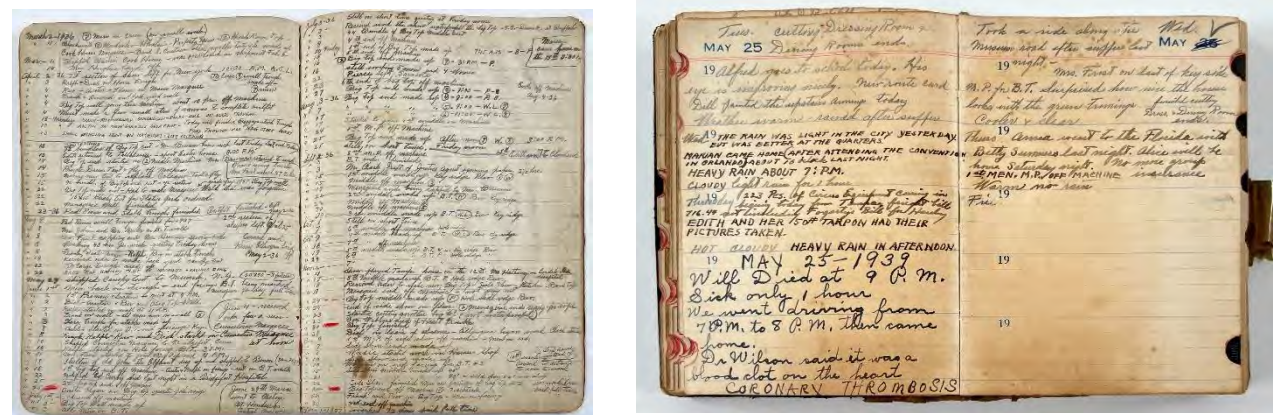
In November of 1939, Henry Ringling North wired attorneys in Sarasota and requested the Hobson file concerning the taking of the show’s working plans. A power of attorney document was executed to retrieve sail loft payroll monies in the Hobson’s personal bank account. Although it is unclear if the Ringling show ever received the \$576.88 from Anna Hobson, the working plans of the Ringling Tent Shop survive today to tell an even greater story. (75)

Nearly a year after Hobson’s death, on April 18, 1940, *The Sarasota Herald-Tribune*, reported that the new big top was ready for use by the circus. The tent had been erected on the winter quarters grounds for inspection and was scheduled to be loaded on the last section of the train scheduled to leave on May 2. For the first time in over a decade William Hobson had not been involved in the fabrication of the tent, supervised by Leonard Aylesworth and a team of fifteen

who had started working on the tent in January. Additional design features for 1940 included a deep blue top, now peppered with red stars. Enhancements to the interior included red and blue sidewalls and red seat covers in the grandstands. The air-conditioning first introduced in 1939 continued to be used in 1940. (76)

William Hobson never knew the horrors of the Hartford Fire on July 6, 1944, a tragedy that not only took the lives of at least 165 patrons, but also landed his colleagues, George Smith and Leonard Aylesworth, in jail, convicted of criminal negligence for the flammable technique in which circus tents were water-proofed using a mixture of gasoline and paraffin. He also did not experience the final under canvas performance of Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus, though in a fitting calculation, William Hobson would have reached retirement age by the time the big top came down for good in 1956.

With William's passing so ended a long line of Hobson family sail makers, further reinforcing the importance of the survival of his written words, the story of the life's work of the World's Greatest Tent Maker.



Parallel day-to-day excerpts from 1938 William Hobson Diaries and Work Logs. Among work logs, Hobson records personal milestones such as birthdays, marriages, children leaving for college, deaths, vacations and weather conditions.

Recorded as written

1928 Outfit – Ringling Bros. – Hobson Composition Book (in bold). Photo upper left

William Hobson Personal Diary – Five Year Diary, a gift from his daughter Alice, Christmas, 1936. (in plain text). Photo in upper right.

Saturday, January 1

New Year's came on Saturday – we worked our usual half-day

I have bot 44 gals. of gas so far. New Year's day – We worked Sat. Morning. Leif was late – He overslept. We are going to Orlando tomorrow. Nice and warm

Monday, January 10

Sam Clark began work

Changed the Awning on the Gorilla House to a roller. Bought 6 gals. gas, 74 so far. Marian worked, home after supper. A little warmer wind shifting. Sam Clark began work.

Wednesday, January 12

Kitchen top, property men's top and stable walls made up

Went to the Florida last night and saw a good floor show and picture. Using our new band top for Barnes kitchen, changed the walls from khaki to white. Warm Cloudy

Thursday, January 20

Men began on Barnes Marquee – kitchen done

I am waiting for material to be waterproofed. Yesterday we received 8 rolls 22" #4 and 5 rolls 48" #6. Barnes marquee off machines. Men working on it. A car-load of tires came today. 50+76+126 tires. Thick fog this morning warm.

Tuesday, January 25

Carl T. Hathaway died at 3:45pm

New harness maker went to work. Cole Brothers will have 2 shows on the road this year. Mr. Hathaway died today at 3.45 P.M. He was stricken near the cook house. Strong winds.

Thursday, January 27

Mr. Hathaway buried today at 3:30

Mr. Hathaway buried today. A wonderful funeral – Yeske – Whalen – Randy Blood and Kelly and Haley Pall Bearers. We sure lost a friend. We closed at noon. Cold – 51 degrees in the shop.

Tuesday, February 1

Frank Buck arrived today, he will be with the show this year

Benny Jacobson was in today he wants to buy old canvas and junk. Frank Buck arrived today. Anna painted the hall downstairs today looks good. Getting cooler.

Wednesday, February 2

Barnes marquee waiting on nets, candy tents going thru machines

Curly Stewart is going with the Cole Bros. Show as Supt. Alfred has a boil on the back of his neck. Dr. Wilson put black salve on to draw it. Anna went to the cooking school after supper. Cool - Cloudy

Saturday, February 19

40' M.P. for back yard canopy made up

40' middle for back yd. canopy made. We went to Bradenton. I had my eyes examined and will get my glasses Wed. Warm looks like rain.

Saturday, February 26

End for back yd. canopy made up

We saw a parade from our Porch last night but it was a little dark. The Floats were beautiful. Cold 54 in the shop 44 on our Porch.

Thursday, March 10

Most of small tent finished, 2 women on big top wall for 1938, started making our front door on machine today, must be painted.

I received the 20 little books I ordered. Anna's burn on her leg hurts her, caused by wearing her shoes. Warm.

Monday, March 14

Fred DeWolfe went to New York

More Planes arrived at 1 P.M. Plenty of noise. Frank was sober this morning. Marian went to the Kimbrough concert. Warm 68 in shop at 7 A.M.

Sunday, March 20

Roland Butler and Bradna left for New York to start publicity

154 gals. gas. We went to Treasure Island for a ride in the afternoon. Marian and Alfred went fishing. Almost hot.

Monday, March 21

Big Top wall being made. Gorilla Keeper's (Kronnen) [sic] hand in bad shape. Gorilla bit him.

U.S. planes are still here doing these stunts. Marian and Mr. Merrill were out today taking pictures around the quarters. Warm, like a summer day.

Friday, April 1

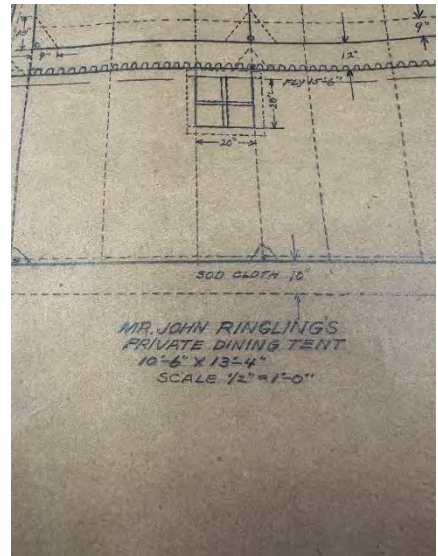
First section left for New York at noon

In New York 1st section left near noon for New York. Stopped at the Capital Hotel.

EPILOGUE – THE HOBSON SCROLL

Alice Hobson Cadorath, daughter of William, was exceptionally talented in her own way. Alice who entered Florida State College as a sixteen-year-old, earned a B.S. in Math, and later worked with architectural firms as a draftsman. While working for the Buckingham Flexible Gunnery School in Ft. Myers, Florida, she was rejected for advancement as Engineering Draftsman, being told that it was a job for men only. She took the position after all the men in the department were drafted into World War II. Knowing the importance of her father's work, Alice kept his archive locked away and safe until her passing in 2023 at the age of 102. Our firm was called to sell the collection and that is how *The Hobson Scroll*, and all of its components have surfaced. While it had not been previously given a name, its name now conveys its importance. William Hobson viewed the scroll only a few times after he had completed it. The family certified that they had never known it to be fully out of the metal tube and on display during the time Alice had locked it away. On the evening of Friday, April 5th, 2024, at the conclusion of the unveiling of the Ringling Museum's new circus exhibit, and in the shadows of Howard Tibbals' Howard Bros. Circus, one of the greatest circus models of all time, *The Hobson Scroll* was carefully removed from its tube. In a private gathering among colleagues and friends, the scroll was unveiled for the first time in more than eighty-five years. The drawing is part technical but also a work of art and genius. *The Scroll* is in remarkable condition and is composed on butcher paper with graphite. It is three feet wide and ninety-eight feet long, nearly as long as the cutting bench at the original Sarasota Winter Quarters sail loft. *The Scroll* depicts thirty-seven structures with a total of sixty-six detailed drawings. From left to right, it begins with the big top drawn in a quarter-inch scale at 194'x490' and ends with John Ringling's private dining tent. Other notable components include the Menagerie, Side Show, Madame Leitzel's private tent and even the Doctor's tent. The collection will come to the auction marketplace during the Circus Historical Society 2024 convention in Atlanta, when the scroll will again be displayed.

THE HOBSON SCROLL, cont.



Wm. Hobson Architectural Drawing Specifications

98' long by 3' wide. 37 structures with 66 drawing details, drawn in the foregoing order, left-to-right:

1. The Big Top, 8 section ends, middle sections – 194'x490'
2. Menagerie – 9 section ends, middle sections - 110'x305'
3. Side Show – 74'x181'6"
4. Large Stable – 70'x190'
5. Dining Room – 55'x212'
6. Pad Room – 55'x175'
7. Dressing Room Tent – Partition – 55'x133'6"
8. Main Door Marquee 30'x36', Backing, Side Wall, Ticket Prices Banner, Commissary Wagon Awning, Night Door
9. Side Show Banner
10. Side Show Partition and Curtains
11. Side Show Door – 12'x15'
12. Cookhouse Door – 10'x20', Partition, Pan Wash, Cook House Canopies, Dining Room Partition, Tarpaulin for Cookhouse
13. Kitchen and Colored Tents – 30'x60'
14. Butcher's Tent – 30'x32'
15. Blacksmith's Shop – 30'x60'
16. Multi-Use – Whalen's Tent – 20'x30'
17. Multi-Use – Wardrobe Tents – 20'x30'
18. Multi-Use – Wild West Dressing Tent – 20'x30'
19. Multi-Use – John Meck Lunch Room – 20x20'
20. Property Men Rest Tent – 20'x20'
21. Elephant Department Private Tent – 20'x20'
22. Large Band Tent – 30'x50'
23. Stock Candy Tent – 30'x40'
24. Dog Tent – 22'x32'
25. Madame Leitzel Private Tent – 10'x20', with awning and fly, windows in sidewall
26. Washroom Tents – 15'x22'6"
27. Doctor's Tent – 15'x15'
28. 4 Candy Tents – 12'x18'9"
29. Snellen's Tent – 13'6"x13'6"
30. Backyard Canopy and Wall
31. Sea Elephant Fly
32. Bandstand Curtain
33. Ladies Public Toilet
34. Workingman's Toilet
35. Ground Seat Cover
36. Public Toilets – 5'x5'
37. Performer's Toilets – 6'x6'
38. Electrician's Fly
39. Jones Car Curtain
40. Reserved Seat Ends
41. Water Troughs for Stables – 3 details
42. Mr. Webb's Private Tent – 10'x15'
43. John Ringling's Private Dining Tent – 16'6"x13'4"



Brian Hollifield is a CHS trustee and resides in the Sarasota, Florida area. He and his wife, Kisha, operate Freedom Auction Company, and maintain circusauctions.com, a division of the organization dedicated to the acquisition and sale of Circus, Carnival, Sideshow and Wild-West memorabilia. The author would like to acknowledge the assistance of the Hobson Family, Kathleen Carter, Jennifer Lemmer Posey, The John & Mable Ringling Museum of Art, the Tibbals Learning Center, Circus World Museum – Parkinson Library, Chris Berry, Robert Cline, Fred Dahlinger, Steve Flint, Kat Vecchio, Illinois State University Special Collections-The Milner Library and the Sarasota Historical Society.

Endnotes

1. Poll conducted by author among CHS membership via email and telephone, April 2024
2. Hobson Collection - newspaper clipping scrapbook
3. *Popular Science*, November 1937
4. Hobson Collection - newspaper clipping scrapbook
5. Interview with Chris Berry, April 4, 2024.
6. *St. Petersburg Times*, May 28, 1939.
7. William Hobson diaries, Hobson Collection.
8. William Hobson diaries, Hobson Collection.
9. *Application For Adoption* by Arthur D. and Alice H. Cadorath, October 26, 1959
10. Ibid.
11. United States Census Report, 1880
12. Hobson & Fliszik mail order
13. Photograph of Alice and William Hobson, Altoona, Pennsylvania, 1912
14. *Application For Adoption* by Arthur D. and Alice H. Cadorath, October 26, 1959
15. *Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus Magazine & Daily Review*, 1936
16. Hobson Collection
17. *Application For Adoption* by Arthur D. and Alice H. Cadorath, October 26, 1959
18. *Herald Tribune*, March 30, 1952.
19. *St. Petersburg Times*, May 28, 1939.
20. *Bandwagon*, V.58, N.1, Dahlinger
21. *Bandwagon*, V.58, N.1, Dahlinger
22. William Hobson – *Ringling Index of Tents*
23. *Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Magazine & Daily Review*. 1935
24. William Hobson diaries, Hobson Collection.
- 24-2. Circus World Museum, Parkinson Library, Ringling Collection.
25. William Hobson, *1928 Outfit – Ringling Show*
26. William Hobson, *1928 Outfit – Ringling Show*
27. Newspaper clipping scrapbook, Hobson Collection.
28. Ibid.
29. William Hobson work logs and diaries, Hobson Collection.
30. *The Hobson Scroll*, Hobson Collection.
31. William Hobson work logs and diaries, Hobson Collection.
32. Letter written by William Hobson to daughter Edith Hobson
33. William Hobson and Carl T. Hathaway Square Tent Patent File, Hobson Collection.

34. William Hobson diaries, Hobson Collection.
35. Letter written by William Hobson to daughter Edith Hobson
36. Letter written by William Hobson to daughter Edith Hobson
37. Letter written by William Hobson to daughter Edith Hobson
38. Letter written by William Hobson to daughter Edith Hobson
39. Letter written by William Hobson to daughter Edith Hobson
40. Letter written by William Hobson to daughter Edith Hobson
41. William Hobson work logs and diaries, Hobson Collection.
42. Newspaper clipping scrapbook, Hobson Collection.
43. William Hobson diaries, Hobson Collection.
44. William Hobson diaries, Hobson Collection; Letter from William Hobson to daughter Edith Hobson
45. William Hobson letter to daughter Edith Hobson
46. Letter from William Hobson to daughter Edith Hobson, Hobson collection of photo negatives
47. The Ringling Papers, Robert L. Parkinson Library and Research Center, Circus World Museum.
48. William Hobson letter to daughter Edith Hobson
49. William Hobson diaries, Hobson Collection.
50. Correspondence, Hobson Collection.
51. William Hobson diaries, Hobson Collection.
52. William Hobson work logs and diaries, Hobson Collection.
53. Plymouth Cordage Co. advertisement clipping, Hobson Collection.
54. William Hobson work logs and diaries, Hobson Collection.
55. "Gargantua and the Visitor", *TIME*, February 26, 1938.; William Hobson letter to daughter Edith Hobson
56. William Hobson diaries, Hobson Collection.
57. *New York Times*, June 27, 1938
58. William Hobson diaries, Hobson Collection.
59. William Hobson diaries, Hobson Collection.
60. William Hobson diaries, Hobson Collection.
61. William Hobson diaries, Hobson Collection.
62. William Hobson diaries, Hobson Collection.
63. William Hobson, *1928 Outfit – Ringling Show*
64. William Hobson diaries, Hobson Collection.
65. William Hobson letter to daughter Edith Hobson
66. Correspondence, Hobson Collection.
67. *Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Route Book*, 1939.
68. William Hobson work logs and diaries, Hobson Collection.
69. William Hobson work logs and diaries, Hobson Collection.
70. Hobson Collection
71. William Hobson work logs and diaries, , Hobson Collection.
72. *Application For Adoption* by Arthur D. and Alice H. Cadorath, October 26, 1959
73. William Hobson obituary, newspaper clipping scrapbook, , Hobson Collection.
74. Correspondence, Hobson Collection.
75. The Ringling Papers, Robert L. Parkinson Library and Research Center, Circus World Museum.
76. *Sarasota Herald-Tribune*, April 18, 1940.



William Hobson, The World's Greatest Tentmaker (above). William and Anna's Wedding and Honeymoon Photos (below/right).

Credit: The Hobson Collection



William Hobson and Children. Left to right are Bill (Willie), Alfred, William, Alice, Marian, Edith. William kept a log of every gallon of gas he put into his Ford (below).

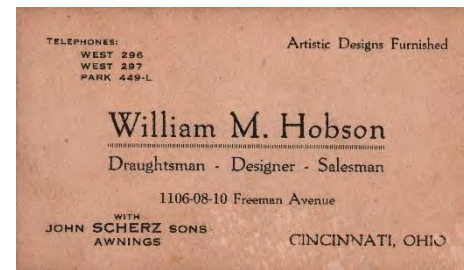
Credit: Hobson Family Collection





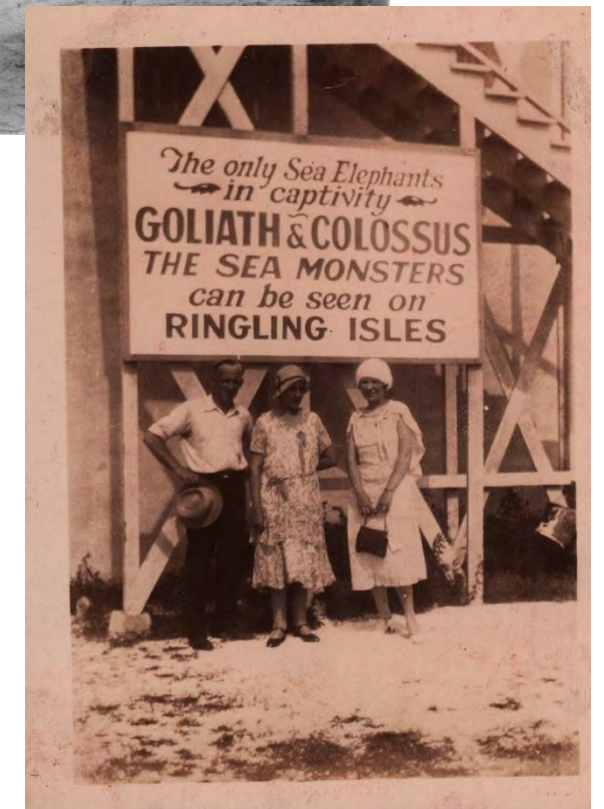
Man With the Plan. William Hobson, second from left with pencil and paper in hand, was employed as draftsman with Scherz & Son, Cincinnati, c.1910. Hobson's business card (right)

Credit: The Hobson Collection



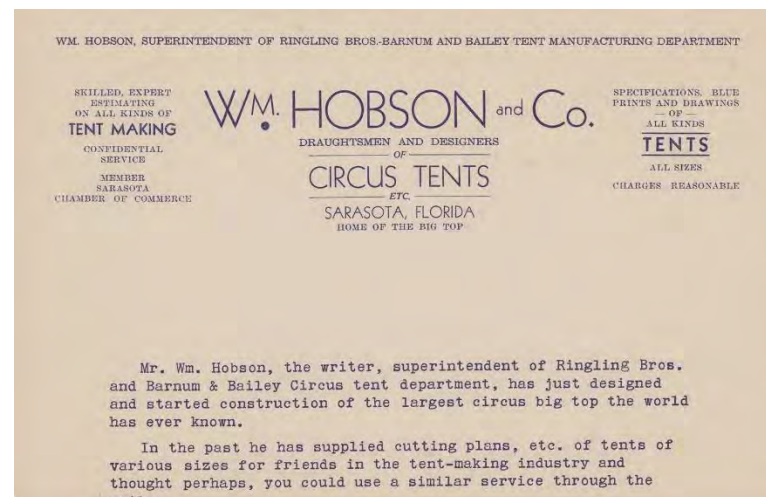
The Captain's Quarters. The Sail Loft in Sarasota Winterquarters, where the great billowy circus tents of summertime were constructed. (above)

Credit: Ringling/Tibbals Learning Center



Colossal Creations. William and wife, Anna, with unidentified woman at the base of the stairs that lead to the Sail Loft where William's daily work took place. The Sail Loft access point faced the guests entering Winterquarters attraction. (right)

Credit: The Hobson Collection



Drafting and Marketing. William Hobson, who sold mail order drawings early in his career, rushed these letters into production and mailed them to prospects during the tumultuous 1938 season when he feared that his livelihood was at risk.

Credit: The Hobson Collection



Good Information. For years, William kept a meticulous record of his work and personal activities in logbooks, ledgers and diaries. (left)

Credit: The Hobson Collection

Keeping Track. Hobson maintained meticulous records of activity in the Sail Loft including this 1929 track of progress on the 1930 Ringling Big Top.

Credit: The Hobson Collection, excerpt from "1928 Ringling-Outfit"

1929 for 1930
 Big Top Show left April 26th

Laid out ends afternoon of April 23rd.
 began cutting same day

May 3-29 Jane began sewing ends on single Needle
 2 Needle Machine still at Bridgeport Conn.

May 6th Finished cutting ends. 62 sections
 May 6th began cutting M. P.

May 17 - Finished cutting Big Top.

May 18 Clara started to join one end.

" 20 marked sections for Quarter Poles

" 21 Big Top wall finished also D.R. part

" 23 - 1-7 section end off machines

June 1st Received order for 20 x 20 and 20 x 30 had to
 stop on big top

June 7th Men began on big top ends.

" 17th 1st 8 section end finished afternoon

" 20th 2nd made up a 7 section end Morning

" 26th 3rd started to join one middle piece on machine

" 28th 4th middle off machine. Hole side

" 29th 5th made up 8 section end

July 3 Clara quit going to Bridgeport (34) 2 days
 for ends

" 6 made up end

" 11 last end made up. Sat. Morning

" 25 made M. P. Hole side ridge

" 30 Big Top off machines

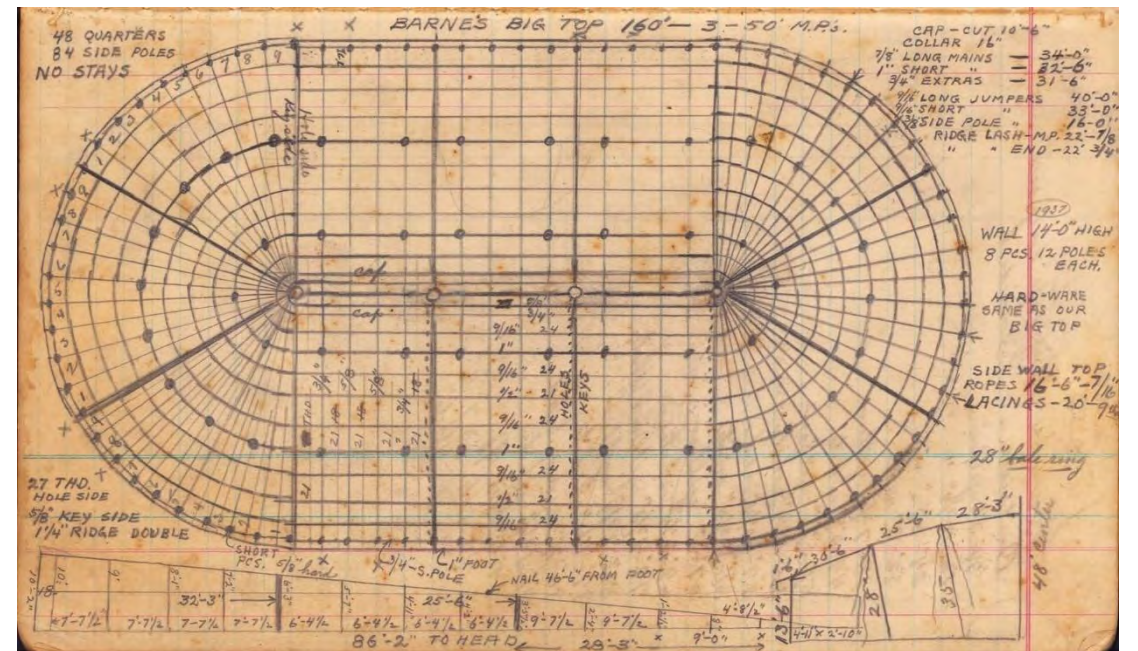
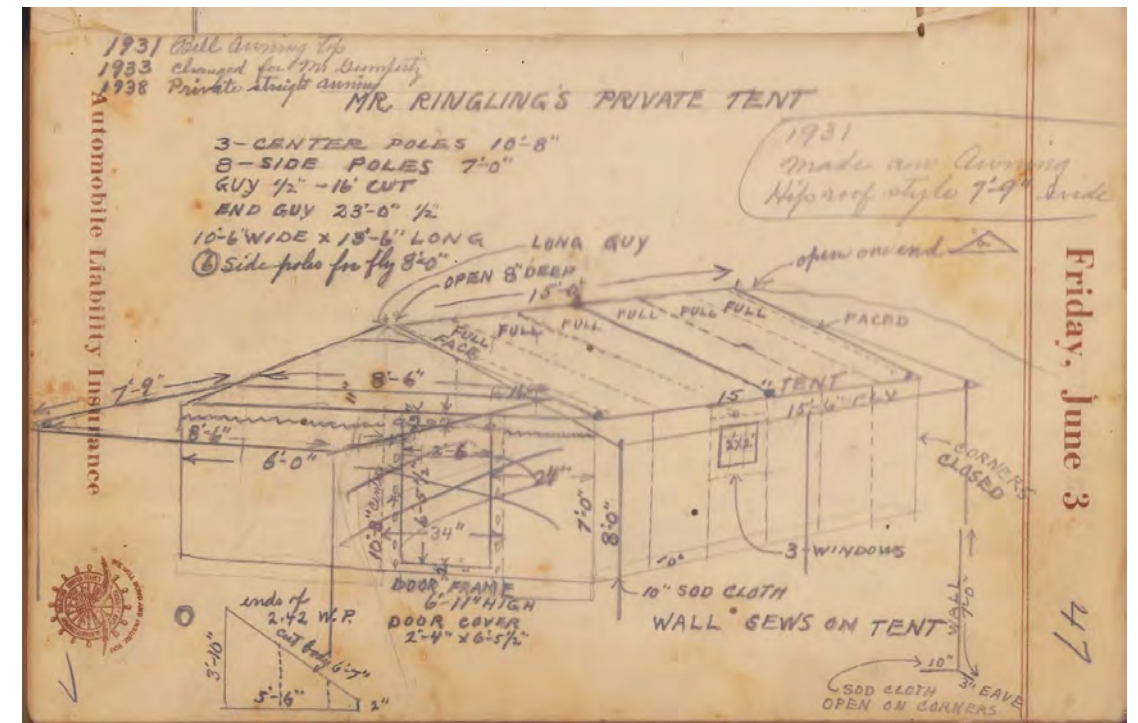
Aug. 3 - Menagere end off machine

" 5 - made up B.T. m. P. Key side

" 9 Menagere end off machine

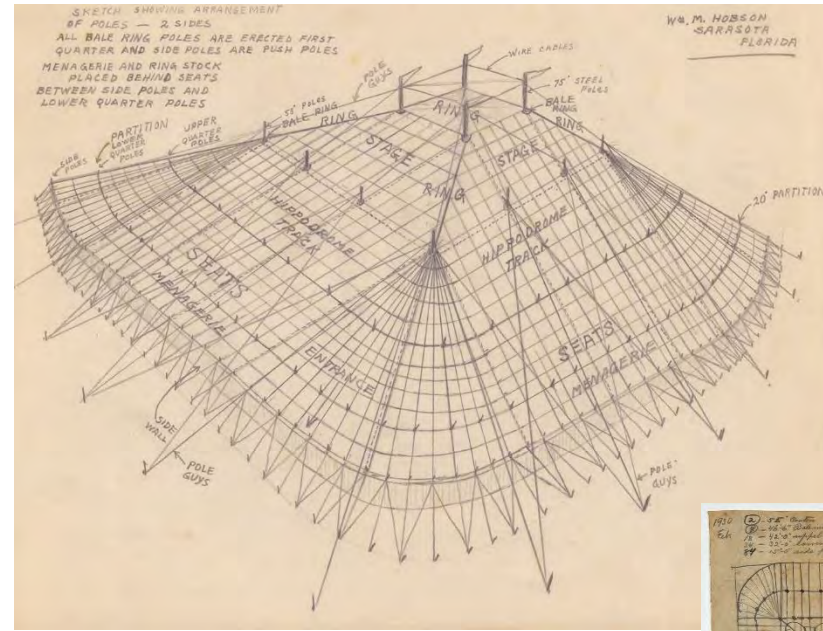
" 16 made up Hole side ridge M. P.

" 22 made up Key ridge side



Architectural Artifacts. The design of Mr. Ringling's Private Tent from Hobson's "Index of Tents". Also shown is an architectural rendering of the Al G. Barnes Circus, "Barnes Big Top".

Credit: The Hobson Collection



Top Secret Plan. William Hobson and Carl Hathaway's revolutionary square big top design plans. The design incorporated a four-pole top with an open interior design that was free of obstructions. An envelope labeled "Very Valuable" contained copy of the plans (left and below).

Credit: The Hobson Collection

Workshop Huddle. Carl Hathaway and William Hobson discuss plans on the Sail Loft floor (below)

Credit: The Hobson Collection



Cording Galore. Plymouth Cordage Company, endorsed by William Hobson, once provided the manila rope that was sewn into the Ringling canvas.

Credit: Ringling/Tibbals photo, Hobson Collection advertisement.

Plymouth Exclusively

..... FOR THE
WORLD'S LARGEST TENT

Says Mr. William Hobson, superintendent of the Tent Manufacturing Department of Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Combined Shows, Sarasota, Florida, "We use Plymouth Manila Rope exclusively—on our big top and on every other tent in the outfit—for we must have rope that we can feel safe in using. Good old Plymouth has stood the test for years."
Plymouth's unflinching ability to stand every test imposed by every use of Manila Rope is what wins it such loyal friends—and makes it so profitable to handle.

In the packing field you will likewise find many firms insisting on "Plymouth exclusively" when they buy twines. Plymouth Long Fiber Tying Twines, stronger and more uniform in size, assure greater knot efficiency and greater safety in shipping.

PLYMOUTH CORDAGE COMPANY
NORTH PLYMOUTH, MASS. AND WELLAND, CANADA
Sales Branches: New York, Boston, Baltimore, Philadelphia, Chicago, Cleveland, New Orleans, San Francisco

PLYMOUTH - *the rope you can TRUST*

May 2-1931

| | |
|------------------|-------|
| Wm. Hobson | 65.00 |
| Mrs. Oris | 15.00 |
| Howard Deal | 40.50 |
| Mr. C. Filken | 15.00 |
| Austin Farat | 45.00 |
| Mrs. Farat | 25.00 |
| Edw. Klodfey | 40.50 |
| Ralph Harding | 40.50 |
| Paul Hutchison | 40.50 |
| Alva Johnson | 22.00 |
| Mrs. C. Johnson | 17.00 |
| Henry Machlenhuk | 40.50 |
| W. Beer | 40.50 |
| Frank Steink | 40.50 |
| Ulick Walker | 40.50 |
| Mrs. Brunson | 45.00 |
| 534.50 | |

Barnes Big Top
 TIME-Week Ending
 CONTINUED
 O.T. 1937

| DATE | NAMES | Sun | Mon | Tue | Wed | Thu | Fri | Sat | Total | Amount |
|-------------------|-------------|-----|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-----|-------|--------|
| Aug 25-27 | Austin Deal | | 9 1/2 | 9 1/2 | 9 1/2 | 9 1/2 | 9 1/2 | 5 | 15 | 67 1/2 |
| 3rd week | Henry | | 9 1/2 | 9 1/2 | 9 1/2 | 9 1/2 | 9 1/2 | 5 | 15 | 67 1/2 |
| Monday 9:30-11:30 | Frank | | 9 1/2 | 9 1/2 | 9 1/2 | 9 1/2 | 9 1/2 | 5 | 15 | 67 1/2 |
| 4th week | Ralph | | 9 1/2 | 9 1/2 | 9 1/2 | 9 1/2 | 9 1/2 | 5 | 15 | 67 1/2 |
| Wed 9:30-11:30 | Ralph | | 9 1/2 | 9 1/2 | 9 1/2 | 9 1/2 | 9 1/2 | 5 | 15 | 67 1/2 |
| Sat 11:30 | Deal | | 9 1/2 | 9 1/2 | 9 1/2 | 9 1/2 | 9 1/2 | 5 | 15 | 67 1/2 |
| 4th week | Henry | | 9 1/2 | 9 1/2 | 9 1/2 | 9 1/2 | 9 1/2 | 5 | 15 | 67 1/2 |
| Aug 28-30 | Frank | | 9 1/2 | 9 1/2 | 9 1/2 | 9 1/2 | 9 1/2 | 5 | 15 | 67 1/2 |
| Monday 9:30-11:30 | Ralph | | 9 1/2 | 9 1/2 | 9 1/2 | 9 1/2 | 9 1/2 | 5 | 15 | 67 1/2 |
| 4th week | Ralph | | 9 1/2 | 9 1/2 | 9 1/2 | 9 1/2 | 9 1/2 | 5 | 15 | 67 1/2 |
| Friday 7:00-9:00 | Deal | | 9 1/2 | 9 1/2 | 9 1/2 | 9 1/2 | 9 1/2 | 5 | 15 | 67 1/2 |
| 7:00-9:00 | Deal | | 9 1/2 | 9 1/2 | 9 1/2 | 9 1/2 | 9 1/2 | 5 | 15 | 67 1/2 |
| 11th week | Henry | | 9 1/2 | 9 1/2 | 9 1/2 | 9 1/2 | 9 1/2 | 5 | 15 | 67 1/2 |
| Monday 9:30-11:30 | Frank | | 9 1/2 | 9 1/2 | 9 1/2 | 9 1/2 | 9 1/2 | 5 | 15 | 67 1/2 |
| 4th week | Ralph | | 9 1/2 | 9 1/2 | 9 1/2 | 9 1/2 | 9 1/2 | 5 | 15 | 67 1/2 |
| Friday 7:00-9:00 | Deal | | 9 1/2 | 9 1/2 | 9 1/2 | 9 1/2 | 9 1/2 | 5 | 15 | 67 1/2 |
| 7:00-9:00 | Deal | | 9 1/2 | 9 1/2 | 9 1/2 | 9 1/2 | 9 1/2 | 5 | 15 | 67 1/2 |

Hobson, the Executive and Professional. This payroll sheet demonstrates the financial structure of the Sail Loft. Hobson was earning as much as some of the Ringling head office personnel and show doctor (above left).

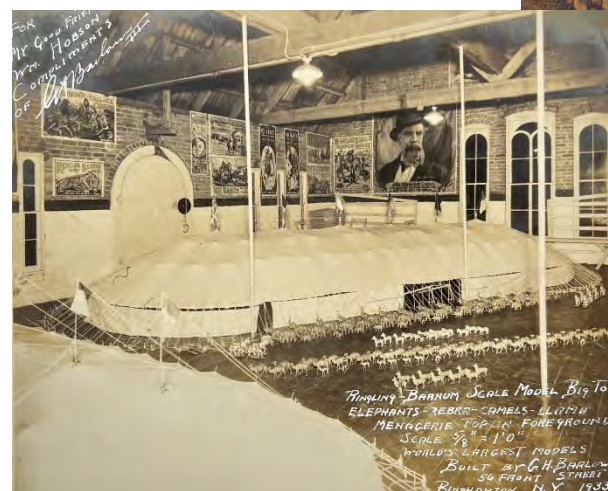
Payday. William Hobson was responsible for paying his crew. This 1937 Barnes Big Top time sheet records not only hours worked on the project. (above right).

Tentmakers at work. The Sail Loft in full swing with four women operating the sewing machines while ten men work canvas from the floor. William Hobson can be seen standing to the left of the sewing machines supervising the crew. The cutting table, is in the left of image (below). Credit: The Hobson Collection



Big Top Storage Room. An interior photo of the Sail Loft showing production in the background and the wardrobe storage mezzanine (above). William Hobson and George Barlow III in the Sail Loft and an image of Barlow's model created from Hobson's full-size specifications (below).

Credit: The Hobson Collection





Boss Canvasman – Jim Whalen surveys the lot for proper placement of Hobson’s canvas structure (at left).

Credit: Freedom Auction Co. Archives

Canvas Department. RBBB Circus with James Healy, Superintendent, Newark, N.J. on the First of May, 1938 (at right).

Credit: The Hobson Collection

Lacing it all together. The Big Top was constructed in sections which included middle and end pieces that were laced together on the show lot. Hobson’s logs referred to these sections as “Ends” and “M.P.” (below).

Credit: Sarasota History Center



The Canvas Spec. Erecting the RBBB Circus Big Top was as much a spectacle as the show itself (above).

Credit: Ringling Museum/Tibbals Learning Center

Winterquarters from the Air. A bird’s-eye view of a canvas top up on the RBBB grounds. The Sail Loft is the large white building in the upper right of the photo (at right).

Credit: Freedom Auction Co. Archives



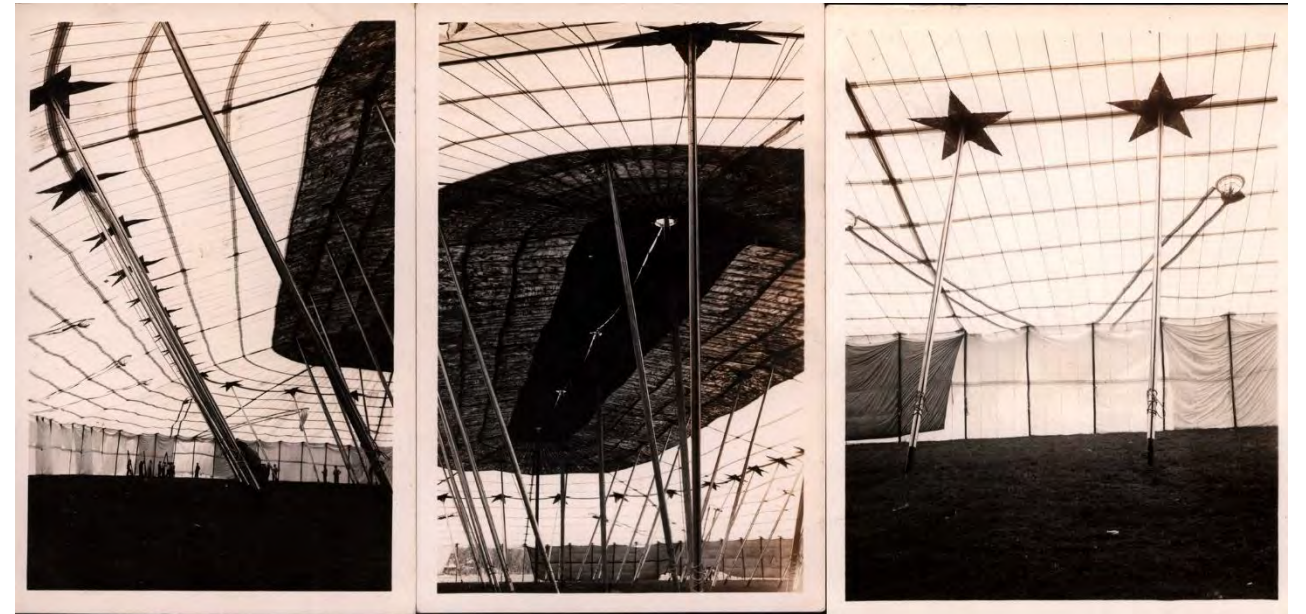
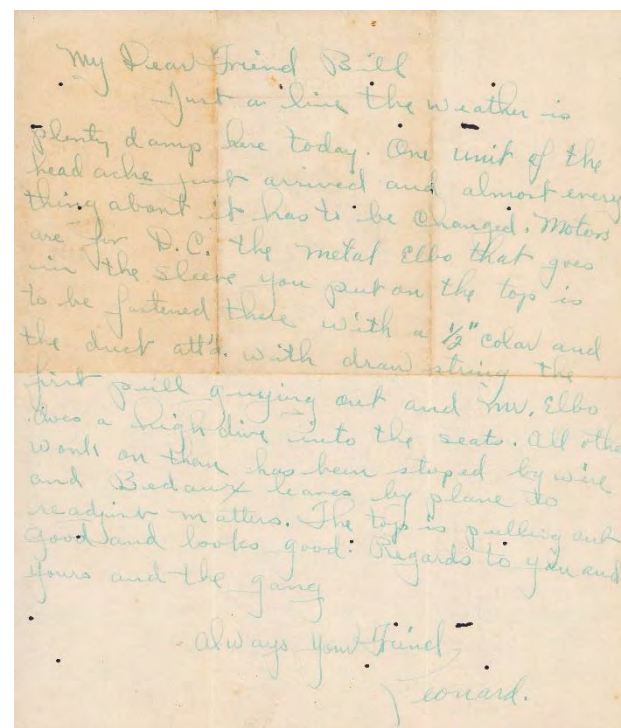
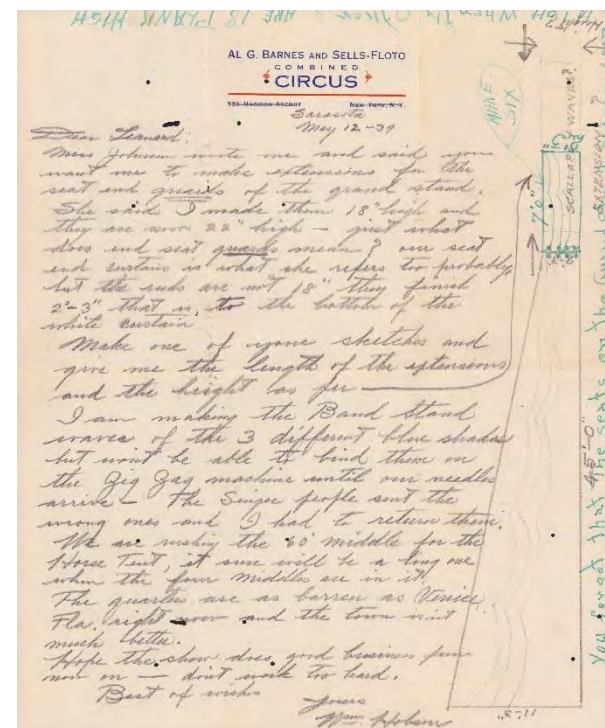


Headache Coming On. Leonard Aylesworth's nickname for the Air-Conditioning units was "The Headache". They can be seen here riding atop the glimmering flats bearing the show title that was debated on Winterquarters grounds between Samuel Gumpertz, Carl Hathaway and William Hobson (above).

Credit: Illinois State University Special Collections, The Milter Library

Hardwork Pays Off. This letter exchange between William Hobson and Leonard Aylesworth told of happenings on the show and the success of the astonishing 1939 Big Top build (below)

Credit: Hobson Collection



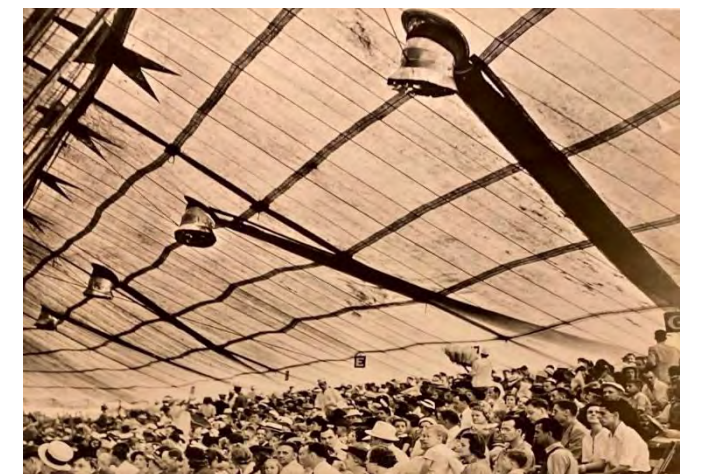
Inspection Day. Hobson and his crew completed the 1939 Big Top under extraordinary circumstances. When it all came together, Hobson snapped these interior shots and remarked, "The tent looks okay; I hope the blue paint stays on" (above).

Credit: Hobson Collection



Keeping Cool. The Big Top was "air-ventilated" by eight air-conditioning wagons pumping cool air into the Big Top via sixteen ducts with funnel-style outlets that were held on with wire. (at right)

Credit: Freedom Auction Co. Archive





First and Last...these posters represent some of the earliest and latest that would have been posted during Hobson's time with Ringling as head of tentmaking.

Credit: Chris Berry Collection

RBBB poster with a date for Sullivan Square Showgrounds, Boston, 1928. Ironically, the show appeared for the final time under canvas during this stand. The Boston Garden opened the following season, and the circus has been indoors there ever since.



Cool Advertising. RBBB Publicists proudly advertised the epochal innovation of an air ventilated tent. This billing proclaimed that the World's Largest Tent was now 100% air-conditioned. Hobson's Big Top was 194' x 490', with a footprint of 95,000 square feet, larger than some contemporary big-box retail stores.

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“Still, I haven’t given up hope for when our nice white canvas gets up in Brooklyn, the people may come in swarms – they will go to a circus under canvas”

William Hobson, The World’s Greatest Tentmaker