

Circus Hall of Fame

3076 E. Circus Lane

Peru, IN. 46970

www.visit.circushalloffame.com

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PERU HISTORY

The collecting of circus posters is a fine art that has been going on for over 100 years. The process that created these magnificent circus lithographs came from hand drawn pieces of art. The process of creating these lithographs then changed over time from using stones for different colors to printing presses. These posters offer a wide array of historical documentation and daily details.



Such is the case of this wonderful poster. The date on the bottom is from 1932. The poster, from the John Robinson Circus, was old paper as the John Robinson Circus was taken off the road after 1931. The real circus was the Sells-Floto Circus as seen on the date

tag. The Sells-Floto Circus had called Peru home since 1921 and 1932 would be their last season on the road.

This gorgeous poster is full of color and just grabs your attention. The use of the 10 Big Shows was not part of the purchase by Jerry Mugivan and Bert Bowers from the Robinson family in 1916. This resulted in a couple of lawsuits that basically achieved nothing.

Being a typical one sheet (42" wide by 28" tall) by lithographic standards, the date tag adds another 8" to the poster. This poster was recently restored and linen backed for years of posterity by Vincent Newkirk at Chicago Poster Restoration.

In January of this year, this poster came up for auction at the Florida based Freedom Auction. It sold and then, as a huge surprise to the International Circus Hall of Fame, this poster was donated to us as a huge part of the Peru Circus Winter Quarters history.

This poster will now be matted and framed for display which will allow for easy movement and portability for exhibits at the International Circus Hall of Fame or any other location.

This poster is a wonderful addition to the International Circus Hall of Fame archives that does help document the wonderful history of the circuses from Peru.

WAGON REPAIRS

Have you ever wanted to see a wooden wheel rebuilt and readied for moving an antique circus wagon again? Due to the Generosity of several donors, the Sig Sautelle Band Chariot will be having all four wheels repaired and / or rebuilt. Finding a company to rebuild these wheels however, isn't the easiest thing in the world. One company that the International Circus Hall of Fame has used in the past, isn't working on these types of wheels anymore. A long search then began. Finally, a company in Shippshewana was found that will work on them.

The Sig Sautelle Band Chariot was built in 1887 by the Sullivan and Eagle Wagon Works in Peru, Indiana. The wheels all need work with one needing to be completely rebuilt. We will be sending them off in a few weeks and hope to have them back in time for the annual Peru Circus City Festival parade, the third Saturday in July.



The Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Bandstand wagon needs a lot of metal cut out and new metal welded in place. Built in 1950, this all steel wagon held the huge circus band under the direction of Merle Evans during the performances. Inside, the band instruments were stored for travel along with one of the buggies used in the specs. Repair estimates are over \$ 2000.00. While we have not raised all this money yet, we do have some funds to start working on replacing metal this spring

during our annual work week. New wheels were put on last year. Once the metal is replaced, we can start sanding, priming and painting it.



The old wooden Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus Commissary # 1 was built back in the 1930s. Later modified to a steel frame and rubber tires, the wagon had a huge water tank that covered the entire bottom half of the wagon.



(Sverre Braathen slide – Milner Library)

The wagon came to Peru in 1986, completely falling apart. We still have the original steel frame and undergear. We have had some funds raised to get wheels under it again and start the frame clean-up.

This is one wagon our volunteers can actually have a hands-on experience working on during our work weeks. Being made completely out of wood, we estimate this wagon will require approximately \$4,000 to \$5,000 to completely rebuild. To become a wagon sponsor, simply visit us at <http://visit.circushalloffame.com/wagon-restorations/>

LARGE DONATION . . .

Having journeyed out to visit the International Circus Hall of Fame several years ago from the east coast, the Reynolds family found a perfect fit for the 3/4" scale model display of the Hagenbeck-Wallace Circus that was all hand made by the patriarch of the family, Clyde Reynolds.



The entire donation is composed of over 100 different units from finely carved wagons to hand carved draft horses, animals and people. All of this has its very own travel containers to place each wagon and piece into. There are baggage wagons loaded with seating, the steel arena, elephant pedestals, generators, poles and tents and railroad cars.



The old-fashioned daily circus street parade is all part of this generous donation. One of our existing showcases will have its current display taken out this spring and re-worked to put this large model display on exhibit for all to see this summer in the International Circus Hall of Fame Museum.

MORE DONATIONS . . .

The International Circus Hall of Fame was excited to have received a donation of Circus Route Cards from the John Robinson Circus. These route cards help document the circuses that left Peru each year and are getting harder to find all the time. A couple were from 1924 and most were from 1927.



We have received numerous slides and photographs in the last several months. We are slowly digitizing many of these to share with everyone else.

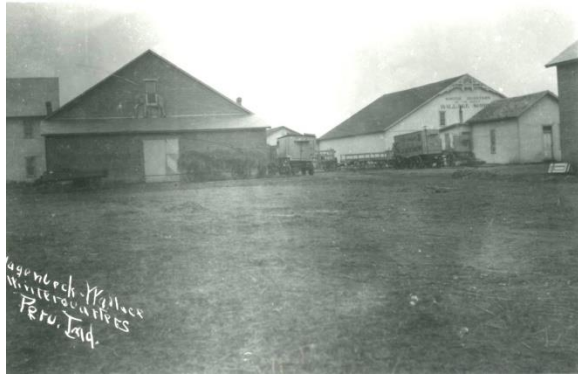


Here is a slide of the Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus setting up inside an arena. This is one of the images you just don't get to see everyday as the public was never allowed in the arenas during set-up.

WINTER QUARTERS

The property the International Circus Hall of Fame is located on was purchased by Ben Wallace in 1892 to become his new circus winter quarters. The land had previously been part of the Miami Indian Nation.

We think it is incredibly important to not only operate the Circus Hall of Fame, but to preserve the history of the circus in Peru, Miami County, the State of Indiana and the land upon which we call home.



This is a George Graf photo taken at the Ben Wallace winter quarters on this land. In 1921, when Ben Wallace passed away, Jerry Mugivan and Bert Bowers bought this land and the railyards in North Peru. They started a major construction on this very site in 1922 that both utilized some of the Ben Wallace buildings and tore some others down.



The newly constructed large performing wild animal barn was literally built between two former Ben Wallace brick buildings. This building was then over 200 feet long.

Huge Barns, 150 feet long by 70 feet wide, were constructed for the horses and elephants and one was built to become the wagon shop. Each barn was numbered and named.



This barn is one of five still remaining. It is designated as a National Historic Landmark and serves the Circus Hall of Fame as the main Museum Building.

The signature pieces of the Ben Wallace legacy were his astounding gate portals. There was one at every entrance to a farm and a few on the Circus winter quarters to start with. We have found numerous photographs over the years to document so many of these hand-crafted gates.



It is our goal to be able to rebuild the small pump house that would be on the very left of this photo and then be able to rebuild the gate portal that was once the Main entrance to the American Circus Corporation's winter quarters, in Peru. This land served as the longest operating circus winter quarters in America and that is a legacy, we don't want anyone to forget.