



Circus Hall of Fame

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www.visit.circushalloffame.com

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NEW ROOF

After nearly four years of Fundraisers, GoFundMe projects and donations, the Circus Hall of Fame has finally received two grants to allow us to have a new roof put on the Museum barn. Built in 1922, this huge barn was the Blacksmith and Woodworking Dept. building No. 6. This is where all of the wagons were worked on, repaired and built from the ground up.



Many of you have visited over the last 35 years and know that the Museum collection is inside this building now. Some of it is in a climate-controlled environment and some of it is not. For the last three years we have known of leaks and been able to protect all below, but the leaks are getting worse and the

timing to get a new roof couldn't come at a better time. Finding a contractor has turned into a real struggle. The top layer of shingles were put on in 1991. They are literally gone in some places. There is a layer of shingles under them that are made up of a 12% Chrysotile make-up. Many people have called this the white asbestos. This requires an OSHA Mandated training for anyone to take them off. There is little to any issue with these shingles. They don't have a fine dust such as asbestos wrapped around a pipe might. They don't need to be wetted down. They simply put a layer of plastic inside the dumpster first before tossing the shingles in. The Training is the issue as most groups don't have the training to do the job.

We have selected a lighter brown Timberline Shingle that is guaranteed for 30 years and can withstand 130 mile per hour winds. That should help preserve the building for years to come. We will also have enough money to start having some of the windows in that barn repaired or replaced. Several have blown out with the hard winter winds in the last few years.

Once the roofers get started, they should only take about ten days to complete the project. New gutters will be installed

WE NEED YOUR HELP

The two big barns at the American Circus Corporation winter quarters command a lot of attention. And they deserve it. The two massive face-to-face barns are uniquely breathtaking from the outside. Being built in 1922 by the newly formed American Circus Corporation, it's easy to imagine them at their peak. From the inside, there were animals of all kinds, with all the sounds (and yes, smells) that go along with them would have been far-reaching. Wagons always coming in and out, repaired and repainted. The barns also require our attention because of their great need. They are very expensive to maintain and preserve. Both were named to Indiana Landmarks most Endangered buildings in October of 2019.



(Taken sometime in the 1920s)

The Winter Quarters' designation (from the National Trust for Historic Preservation) of "National Historic Landmark" includes another surviving building that gets less attention. The General Offices occupied a small building that is often overlooked by visitors. This building had enormous significance for the American Circus Corporation.

During the winter, when the animals, personnel, and equipment were being prepared for the next year's tour, the executives used these offices to make the route, contract for lots, sign up the performers

and working staff, arrange for railroads, order the advertising for as many as five circuses at the same time and secure all necessary provisions. Ideas for new productions were discussed there, as well as advertising, features, and acts. It was the beating heart of the whole operation.

The important work at the office didn't subside once the show headed to the rail yard in the early spring. During the season, the managers of the various shows wrote to Peru for help with a wide range of issues. Jerry Mugivan, a chief executive officer of the American Circus Corporation and the logistical mastermind with decades of experience handled these requests after he retired from the road in 1923. People wanting a job with a show would approach them at city after city, and sometimes their requests were forwarded to Peru. At times, more animals were needed during the tour and Mugivan might suggest a source to follow up on. Supplies of all kinds, from office forms to animal tack would be requested to be sent immediately. And now and then, a manager would vent his frustration with opposing Ringling billposters and ask for Mugivan's advice in dealing with them.

We are currently working on renovating the inside of the General Offices to its past appearance. The walls are all stucco and lathe boards. So far we have found three layers of wall paper under the paint. Unfortunately, we have yet to locate any interior photographs of this crucial part of the American Circus Corporation's operation. If you think you might have such a photo, or know where one could be found, please let us know! Feel free to Contact us at peruhalloffame@gmail.com.

IT'S CIRCUS TIME

The Circus Hall of Fame is known for the fun and historical opportunities that occur each year. As we all know, the COVID-19 pandemic changed all our worlds.

Oscar Garcia's All American Circus was performing in Indiana when the Pandemic became full blown. They were offered and agreed to stay on the Circus Hall of Fame property where they could stay away from one and all and be left alone as well. Little did they know they would be there for almost five months.



(Circus time in July)

The All American Circus and the Circus Hall of Fame followed all state mandates to open after July 1st. Masks and gloves were given to all Museum goers. With the third week of July being the traditional Circus City Festival week, the Circus gave five performances to hundreds of people. Those people also enjoyed a quick trip through the Circus Museum after each show.

Zach Morecraft entertained the audiences on Saturday July 18th with two calliope concerts featuring the Circus Hall of Fame's very own Air calliope.

Friday, July 17th was our Fundraising auction. We were online as well as live in the Circus Museum. Blue Sky Auctions handled the event.

RESTORATION

It takes a lot to bring an almost 100 year old building back to life in the manner it started. The old American Circus Corporation offices are slowly being restored. We started last year with a complete roof repair and new shingles.



(Regine Brindle photo)

Earlier this year, the chimney on the far right was removed as not being original. This summer, volunteer, Peter Sturgis, from Wisconsin, started the clean-up inside of the building. After tearing out the carpeting in three rooms we found a beautiful hardwood floor just waiting to be re-sanded and finished.



We are getting bids on re-painting the ceilings and walls of one room while another room will have to be completely sheet-rocked again.

WAGON BUILDING

Have you ever wanted to see an antique circus wagon be put back in pristine condition again? The Circus Hall of Fame is currently trying to raise money to restore three wagons all in different levels of need.

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. This is going to cost about three thousand dollars.



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.



Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus Commissary # 1 was built out of wood 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)

After sitting outside for 22 years at the Circus Hall of Fame and another six years after it closed, the wagon came to Peru in 1986, completely falling apart. We still have the original steel frame and undergear. It will need to be cleaned up and repainted and new wheels added.



(Bob Cline photo in 2017)

We want to rebuild this wagon. Being made out of wood, our volunteers can actually have a hands-on experience 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/>