

Circus Hall of Fame

3076 E. Circus Lane

Peru, IN. 46970

www.visit.circushalloffame.com

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GRANTS

The Circus Hall of Fame, Inc. has been steadily applying for grants from various sources for the last couple of years. Our efforts were turned down several times again this year and rewarded in a few other cases.



The former American Circus Corporation Office Building is registered as a National Historic Landmark. The main building to the right is the original building complete with a full basement. The portion to the left was added after the 1944 sale of the property to Emil Schram.

This year we successfully completed a grant request to the Indiana Historical Society to rehabilitate the entire building complete with a Heating and AC system. The Eli Lilly Foundation helps fund these grants. Our \$50,000 grant requires a \$7,500 match.

During our Spring work week, we finished tearing out the old kitchen and rebuilt the wall between the two rooms that had been torn away.

During that Spring work week, we also had a professional electrician come in and bring power in from the outside to a new distribution panel in the basement. Peru Utilities then made the power live for us.



The last week of September saw our chief electrical engineer, Bob Sapita, accompanied by our Board President, John Wright, make all the proper connections to the distribution panel. We now have electrical outlets and lights throughout the building working again. A lot of new wire was run with new outlets, switches and telephone jacks installed.

A contractor has already been approved to rebuild and replace every single window in the building. These will all be made out of wood again to keep the National Historic Landmark designation intact.

A spec sheet is being drafted for the HVAC system to achieve a climate-controlled environment for our archives and artifacts. Four local HVAC contractors have already examined the building.

We are also hoping we can stretch the money far enough to save the corn crib right behind the office building with a new roof on the south side. The north side already had metal roofing added some years ago. If we can get the new south roof on it, this will give us another 24 foot wide by 80 foot long dry storage space for some of the wagons.

The Circus Hall of Fame, Inc. received a \$4,950.00 mini-grant from the Indiana Historical Society to help mitigate mold and mildew in some storage areas. This grant is also funded by the Lilly Foundation.

Our grant request asked for two de-humidifiers, one large and one small unit, a chest freezer to freeze any contaminated articles in it, a Rainbow Vacuum system that would use water to stop the airborne particles from being blown through a vacuum, storage bags, gloves, masks, de-acidifications sprays, hygrometers to record the Temperature and Humidity and other items.

We received a \$2,000 grant from the Northern Indiana Community Foundation that allowed us to create two new video displays with DVD players that simply play

our DVDs over and over. We then took several of our archived films that we had digitized last year and played them on these screens. When you visit now, you can see film videos taken in the old Peru Winter quarters, the Hagenbeck-Wallace Circus on the road, and color videos from the 1940s of the Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus unloading, setting up and during the performances.

We also received a \$1,000 grant from the Boomerang Sisterhood Foundation to be used in purchasing showcases and display cases for future new exhibits.

We received a grant last year to purchase a new computer and the PastPerfect Museum Inventory software. This has allowed us to start making a huge dent in documenting what we have and knowing where it is. It also tells us what condition it is in for future use or needed preservation efforts.

Having had three old circus lithographs completely restored last year, we are excited to see the results when we get three more back later this year that will be completely restored and linen backed for future use.

SPRING WORK WEEK

Our annual work week this year saw more things happen than ever before. A huge job of tearing out the backroom floor in the old American Circus Office Building got to be a bigger job than ever expected. The original concrete steps coming out of the building were discovered under the wooden floor of the back room. The sill had to be replaced, floor joists needed to be replaced, the structure had to be jacked up to get it level again, a new sub floor put down and finally a “new” old door was installed. The door frame had to be created to fit the door. Volunteers, Charles Boas from Texas and Jerry from Ohio took on the week-long job and completed it all before leaving on Friday.



A few showcases had been cleaned out during the early spring so that new displays could be installed. Heather and Patrick Bracy came in from the Indianapolis area before work week and painted them. Bruce Hawley and Joe Barney came in from Connecticut, where they both volunteer at the Barnum Museum. They helped with installing some of the Clyde Reynold's model parade and painting a fiberglass elephant head to be placed on the post for display.

John Polacsek of Detroit, Michigan helped sort out a recent donation. Mike Butash came in from Pennsylvania and worked on the Tom Dunwoody display and several of the Circus Model Builders exhibits. He was assisted by Phil Rager from Indiana on one day.

Peter Sturgis came in from Baraboo, Wisconsin to help for a couple days in the Plumbing dept. Jim Davis came in from Ohio to set-up his Beers and Barnes Circus display for us.

Bob Sapita & Larry Sayler from Illinois worked installed new LED lights in the Office and new Exit and Emergency lighting in the Museum. Larry's wife, Cindy helped with the painting of the showcases.

A new 8 foot tall and 16 foot long Map was erected to show visitors how large the American Circus Corporation winter quarters was in 1929. This was the largest the winter quarters ever became. Buildings were constantly being destroyed by fires over the years.



Five of those buildings still stand today to become the Nucleus of the International Circus Hall of Fame. All of them are registered as National Historic Landmarks.

A Clyde Beatty likeness returned to the steel arena at the Peru Circus winter quarters with a perfect photo opportunity for all visitors.



Volunteers, Shirley Snyder, Regine Brindle and Bruce Brindle have worked tirelessly throughout the spring and summer. They have been opening showcases, cleaning them out, freshening up displays, painting others, and creating new exhibits for a fresh look for our visitors. This is now a yearly goal. We plan on changing a couple displays out each year to generate a renewed interest in the American Circus Corporation and the fact that the Peru winter quarters were the longest operating facility in America as well as the largest.

PAT KELLY

Thomas Patrick Kelly was born in Peru, Indiana to Emmett Kelly, Sr, and Eva Mae Kelly (Lewis) on March 19, 1934. He grew up in the circus, attending various schools as a child and started performing in 1958 for himself.



Pat became the resident clown at the Circus Hall of Fame when it opened in 1991. He was there every year. In 1998, he had the great experience to perform with his brother, Emmett Kelly, Jr. for the very first time.



Pat's health started to slow down a couple years ago when he became a resident of the Hickory Creek Senior Living Community in Peru, IN. Loved by one and all, no one ever heard a mean word come from his lips. The man that had brought so much laughter to so many over the years was called to a bigger venue on June 27, 2021.



The Circus Hall of Fame worked with the friends of Pat Kelly to create a display for Pat. We were also able to host his Memorial Tribute beginning with Zach Morecraft playing a Calliope concert ahead of time. Father Richard Notter of the Circus Ministry presided. Several guest all spoke of Pat and their memories and experiences with him. All Military rites were enabled.



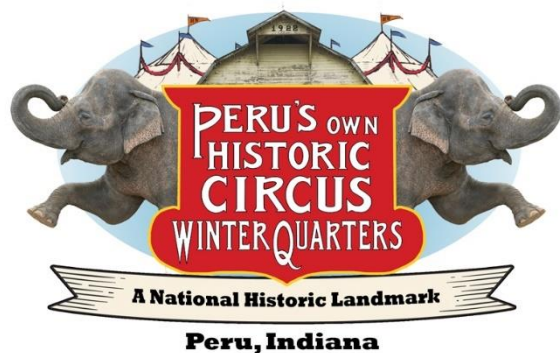
The memorial was open to the public and was held in the Museum Building of the Circus Hall of Fame on Wednesday, July 21st, 2021.

100TH ANNIVERSARY

2022 marks the 100th Anniversary of the American Circus Corporation taking over the Circus winter quarters and beginning to rebuild the winter quarters into the giant entity it became.

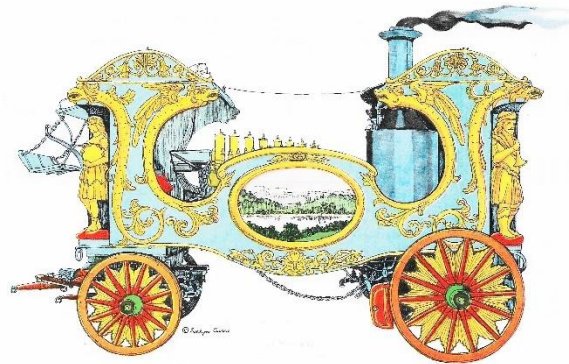
Jerry Mugivan and Bert Bowers had been in the circus business since 1905. They had been renting the Ben Wallace winter quarters since 1914. When Mr. Wallace died in 1921, they quickly purchased the property along with their new partner, Ed Ballard. The American Circus Corporation was incorporated in the State of Delaware. In the spring of 1922, construction began on the new winter quarters expansion with massive buildings such as the two that still stand today. Becoming the largest circus conglomerate in America, they thrived with more construction in 1925 and 1929. They also managed to acquire the contract to place a circus in Madison Square Garden in 1930.

John Ringling couldn't bear that and after meeting Jerry Mugivan and Bert Bowers, he eventually bought the entire American Circus Corporation holdings, property and show titles. The New York Stock Market crashed six weeks later causing the Ringling empire to almost crash as well. Slowly all of the Peru owned shows were closed and the Peru Property was sold in 1944, ending over 50 years of the circus in these Peru winter quarters.



Circus Hall of Fame Board member, Matt Holdzkom created our new logo for us last year.

The Circus Hall of Fame is planning on a few events next year to help commemorate the 100th Anniversary. You'll want to mark your calendars for the largest event outside of Indianapolis next year when the "Circus Calliope and Mechanical Music Festival" will be held on Friday June 17th and Saturday June 18th. This is an all-day event for the entire family with fun for all ages. Great food and snacks will be available, the Circus Hall of Fame Museum and Gift Shop will be open and you'll get to hear calliopes from around the country as well as Band Organs, Unafons and other Mechanical Musical devices. Simply go to [Circus Calliope and Mechanical Music Festival | International Circus Hall of Fame](#) for more details as they become known.



Tickets can be purchased already on the website and parking will be plentiful as a couple more acres of farmland will become a parking lot by next spring.

More events will be announced as they become available. The Circus City Festival will be held from July 18th to the 23rd with the huge Circus Parade on Saturday, July 23rd at 10 am.

Our spring work week will be held June 13th to the 19th next summer to allow us to get ready, get some painting done and enjoy the huge Circus Calliope and Mechanical Music Festival.

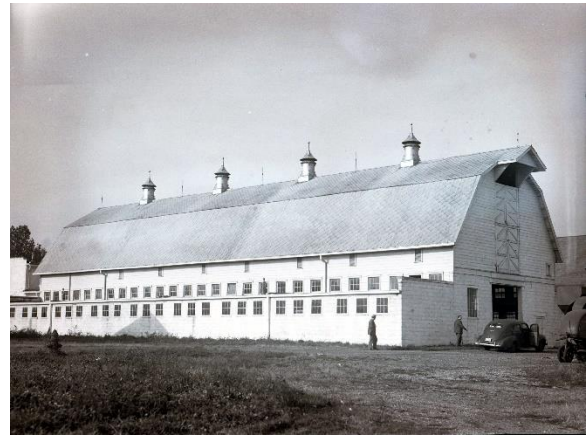
SAVING AMERICA'S TREASURES

The Saving America's Treasures is a Federal Grant program through the National Park Service. It is designed to help restore and save old historic buildings (in our case) that are registered as National Historic Landmarks. Grants can be issued from a low of \$125,000 to a high of \$500,000. The Barnum Museum and Circus World in Baraboo, Wisconsin both received \$ 500,000 preservation grants this year. We applaud them and hope this will make a major difference in trying to preserve more circus history.



The elephant barn was built in 1922. It is 70 feet wide and 150 feet long. It is in need of a lot of care. A new roof needs to be installed and that requires removing the top shingles and the asbestos laden ones underneath. The Museum barn had all of this taken care of last fall.

The wing that was there housed all of the menagerie big cats. A long line of cages was on the inside with a chute door to the outside where the cages could be backed up to the barn to safely move the animals back and forth. About 15 to 20 years ago, the ends were rebuilt to start the restoration of the wing again. The original footer is still in the ground. There were windows with shutters on the western wall.



This photo from 1937, shows the east side where the elephants were housed. There was a training ring in the center of the barn. This long wall is now gone as are all of the windows. The same is true for the west side.

The Circus Hall of Fame would love to apply for a Saving America's Treasures Grant. We have until December 14th to craft a grant application.

Unfortunately, this is a dollar for dollar matching grant. For us to get the minimum \$125,000 grant to restore this barn, we will need to provide \$125,000 in matching funds.

We need your help. We need your tax-deductible donations to help raise this amount of money, we will need Corporate sponsors, beneficiaries, and we need all of your friends and neighbors. A check or money order can be mailed to:

The Circus Hall of Fame
3076 E. Circus Lane
Peru, IN. 46970

Please mark any contribution as Matching Funds. Anyone that wants to do this electronically may go through PayPal. You don't have to have an account with them as they accept most credit cards. Our PayPal address is 5Tigeract@gmail.com

Everyone that provides any assistance will receive a letter for their taxes indicating your charitable contribution.

PERU LIBRARY . . .

The International Circus Hall of Fame has been changing exhibits inside the Circus Museum for a couple of years now. This year we took out two large showcase displays that featured different toys portraying the circus.



With interest from the Peru Library this spring, we were delighted to place some exhibits with them. Then the idea of displaying some of the circus toys at the Library became a summer exhibit.

We were delighted to help with the literary side of reading books by providing a place for Miss Carla Murtha reading spotlight. We hosted Miss Carla Murtha and Michelle Spangler when they visited the Winter Quarters one Summer morning and recorded two short book readings for the Peru Public Library!



TELEVISION

Our Summer season started out with three television interviews during our May work week. At that time these interviews were about the Cole Bros. Menagerie Canvas and Pole wagon that had been saved from the Paul Kelly winter quarters on the west side of Peru, before the State DOT tore the buildings down.



In June, we were honored to find a film crew from the popular Television show, "The Hoosier Story" starring Anne Shaw, arrive. She had Bruce Embrey join her as they discussed many of the items at the Circus Hall of Fame. The show aired in September.



END OF YEAR

The Circus Hall of Fame hosts what is called Giving Tuesday on Facebook each year. This is the first Tuesday in December. We will be campaigning again to raise money to work on the former American Circus Corporation Office Building. While we do have a grant, we need to raise an additional \$ 7,500.00 match for this grant. Fortunately, we have already raised about \$ 1,500.00.

Many people look at end of the year giving for those last-minute deductions. With the Circus Hall of Fame being a 501c3 Non-Profit, donations are all deductible. Some people have given a one-time donation and others have donated on a monthly basis. None the less, the donations should all be deductible.

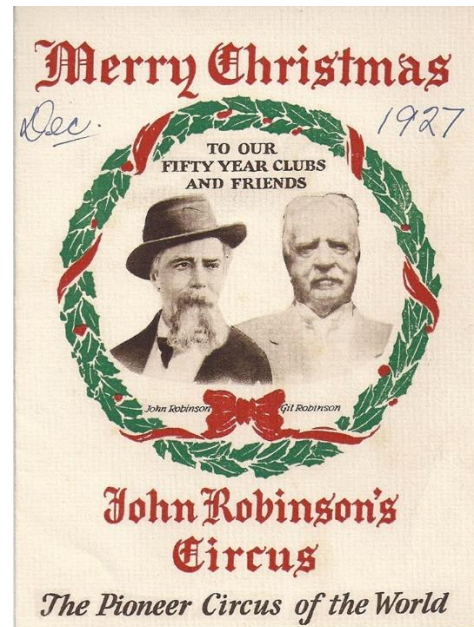
Your donations don't have to go in the General Fund either. Many donations have been designated to be used for archival projects, wagon wheel repairs, wagon restoration, displays and poster restorations.

We have also had several people add us to their wills in the last few years. Not knowing what to do with their collections, the Circus Hall of Fame is a place where we can preserve a collection and display some of it for the public to see. A beautiful set of handmade Carnival pieces were donated earlier this year as well as a wonderful recreation of the 1950s Beers-Barnes Circus truck show. Both of these are on display in the Museum, now.

A large collection of United States Postal Service First Day issued circus stamps and envelopes were donated earlier this year. A small portion of this donation is on display in a showcase inside the Museum. We also received three model circus exhibits to be displayed at a later date, We don't want to turn any donation down, if at all, possible.

MERRY CHRISTMAS

It's hard to imagine that the Holidays are upon us. As a tradition, many of the shows issued specially created Christmas cards each year. Finding any from the American Circus Corporation is very difficult to do. Here is one to enjoy.



All of us associated with the Circus Hall of Fame would like to wish you all a happy and safe Holiday season. May you get to enjoy time with the family. They all grow up way too fast.

VOLUNTEERS

We have accomplished so much this year due to people volunteering to help. We want to thank Dennis Eckerley, Zach Morecraft, Megan Montgomery, Regine Brindle, Bruce Brindle, Shirley Griffin, Michael and Julie Kukowski, Jayden Werley, Doyne Snider, Mike Butash, Pat Russell, Monica Sackett, Wayne Ames, Michael Grace, Linda Hutchinson, Leslie and John Ingalsbe, Ron Short, Mary Snider, Angie Heiberg and all of our work week volunteers. Have a Very Merry Christmas and Happy and Prosperous New Year.