
The History Of The Circus

The Circus Age

The Rise of the American Circus, 1716-1899

When the Circus Came to Town! An American Tradition in Photographs

Step Right Up!

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The Circus Age Routledge
Once an eagerly awaited spectacle, the traveling

circus—that miracle of red wagons, trumpeting elephants and spangled trapeze artists that slipped into town at dawn and disappeared by midnight—has all but

vanished from the American landscape. This work explores circus history from 1793 to the present and addresses the forces of modern culture (such as the popularity of

Cirque du Soleil, and pressure from the animal rights movement) that are pushing big top shows toward what the author calls “circus ballet.” Numerous photographs and in-depth interviews conducted with show owners, performers and directors enrich the narrative. Overall, the book reveals a sobering contrast between circuses of yesterday and today, even as

it honors the outstanding performers who created, and have sustained, the enduring appeal of the circus.

The Rise of the American Circus, 1716-1899

National Geographic Books
To both young and old, the circus remains an icon of American entertainment, a wholesome pastime untouched by the passing years. But the modern circus, with its three rings, ringmaster,

animals, and acrobats, is the product of nearly three hundred years of evolution. This intriguing work chronicles the history of the American circus from its roots in England through its importation to America to the end of the nineteenth century. It introduces the early pioneers of the circus, addresses business concerns such as management and training, and discusses the development

of the show itself, including the incorporation of menageries, the need for animal training and care, the addition of circus music, the use of the tent, and the unique attractions of side shows and “freaks.” Personal stories of those who made their lives under the “big top” are woven throughout the narrative, adding an intimate perspective to one of America’s

most enduring entertainment s.

When the Circus Came to Town! An American Tradition in Photographs

Michael Joseph
An illustrated historical account of the circus's origins and development and of its lore and legends, describing acts and performers from the Circus Maximus to Madison Square Garden.
Step Right Up!
Anchor Daredevils and scantily

clad starlets, fearless animal trainers and startling “freaks” This behind-the-scenes look at the American circus brings together original posters and lithographs as well as remarkable circus photography to explore the glamour and the grit of what was once the largest showbiz industry on earth.

The Circus in Winter

University of Virginia Press
How the lives

and labors of nineteenth-century circus elephants shaped the entertainment industry. Consider the career of an enduring if controversial icon of American entertainment : the genial elephant. In *Entertaining Elephants* Susan Nance examines elephant behavior—drawing on the scientific literature of animal cognition, learning, and communications—to offer a study of

elephants as actors (rather than objects) in American circus entertainment between 1800 and 1940. By developing a deeper understanding of animal behavior, Nance asserts, we can more fully explain the common history of all species. *Entertaining Elephants* is the first account that uses research on animal welfare, health, and cognition to interpret the historical record, examining

how both circus people and elephants struggled behind the scenes to meet the profit necessities of the entertainment business. The book does not claim that elephants understood, endorsed, or resisted the world of show business as a human cultural or business practice, but it does speak of elephants rejecting the conditions of their experience. They lived in a kind of parallel

reality in the circus, one that was defined by their interactions with people, other elephants, horses, bull hooks, hay, and the weather. Nance's study informs and complicates contemporary debates over human interactions with animals in entertainment and beyond, questioning the idea of human control over animals and people's claims to speak for them. As

sentient beings, these elephants exercised agency, but they had no way of understanding the human cultures that created their captivity, and they obviously had no claim on (human) social and political power. They often lived lives of apparent desperation. Battle for the Big Top Houghton Mifflin Harcourt An Album of Indian Big Tops, chronicling the circus

industry in India from 1880 to 2010, was written by Sreedharan Champad, a flying trapeze artist, journalist, story writer, novelist, film script writer, and circus historian. His book reveals the history of Indian circus life and art, as well as details about the industry. He directly contacted the most prominent people in the Indian circus from the 1950s onward and has researched all available

records, making this a lifetime achievement. It took him more than fifty years to complete this history about a "dying art," and no one before has attempted such a book. The book was inspired because, "I had spent my school vacations in circus tents in my boyhood, because some of my close relatives were circus artists living in circus tents."

Slim Jack The Greatest Shows on Earth

This conflict informs us not only of the complicated role that the circus played in Victorian society but provides a unique view into a collective psyche fraught by contradiction and anxiety.

The Circus
Fire Univ of North Carolina Press

*Includes pictures.
*Highlights Barnum's entertainment career and transition into the circus.

*Includes a bibliography for further reading. "We

bring you the circus — that Pied Piper whose magic tunes lead children of all ages into a tinselled and spun-candied world of reckless beauty and mounting laughter; whirling thrills; of rhythm, excitement and grace; of daring, enflaming and dance; of high-stepping horses and high-flying stars. But behind all this, the circus is a massive machine whose very life depends on discipline,

motion and speed — a mechanized army on wheels that rolls over any obstacle in its path — that meets calamity again and again, but always comes up smiling — a place where disaster and tragedy stalk the Big Top, haunts the back yard, and rides the circus train — where Death is constantly watching for one frayed rope, one weak link, or one trace of fear. A fierce, primitive fighting force that smashes

relentlessly forward against impossible odds: That is the circus — and this is the story of the biggest of the Big Tops — and of the men and women who fight to make it.” - Opening remarks from the film *The Greatest Show On Earth!*, a drama set in the Ringling Brothers and Barnum & Bailey Circus. Americans have loved traveling circuses for generations, and none represent the country's love

for entertainment quite like the most famous of them all, the Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus. The five brothers who started a circus in Wisconsin, as well as P.T. Barnum, have had their names become synonymous with the circus, so it's only fitting that the manner in which these men entered the business and the merging of their traveling circuses

together also make for great stories. Circus promoters have long been viewed as somewhat shady hucksters, but none could top P.T. Barnum, who used a blend of traditional circus entertainment, freak show exhibits, and outright hoaxes to create "The Greatest Show on Earth". Barnum introduced America to Jumbo the Elephant, one of the most legendary acts in the history

of the circus, as well as "exhibits" like Joice Heth, an elderly African American woman Barnum advertised as a 161 year old who nursed George Washington. He also notoriously perpetrated hoaxes with General Tom Thumb and claimed to have a live mermaid, so it's no surprise that Barnum is often apocryphally quoted as saying, "There's a sucker born every minute."

While he didn't actually say that, he said something similar: "Nobody ever lost a dollar by underestimating the taste of the American public." Around the same time that Barnum was operating the Barnum & Bailey's circus, the Ringling Brothers were engaging in more traditional circus activities in Wisconsin. As their traveling circus became better known in the late 1880s, it was advertised as

the "Ringling Brothers United Monster Shows, Great Double Circus, Royal European Menagerie, Museum, Caravan, and Congress of Trained Animals". The Ringling Brothers were eventually successful enough that they were able to buy Barnum's circus after Barnum had already died, and they merged the traveling circuses together in 1919. The Greatest Show

on Earth: The History of the Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus examines the origins of the famous circuses, the background of the important individuals involved, and their merger into the most famous circus of all. Along with pictures of important people, places, and events, you will learn about "The Greatest Show on Earth" like never before, in no time at all.

Rings of Desire

CreateSpace

Davis examines the history and cultural significance of circuses and Wild West shows in turn-of-the-century America. *A Brief and Spectacular History of the Circus* London : Tantivy Press ; San Diego : A.S. Barnes Starting in the 1870s, the barns, icehouses, gymnasiums and empty theaters of central Illinois provided the practice sites for aerial performers whose names still command reverence in

the annals of American circus history. Meet Fred Miltimore and the Green Brothers, runaways from the Fourth Ward School who became the first Bloomington-born flyers. Watch Art Concello, a ten-year-old truant, become first a world-class flyer, then a famous trapeze impresario and finally Ringling Brothers and Barnum and Bailey Circus's most successful

general manager. The entire art of the trapeze--instruction, training, performance and management--became a Bloomington-Normal industry during the tented shows' golden age, when finding a circus flying act without a connection to this area would have been virtually impossible.

The Circus and Victorian Society

Arcadia Publishing
"Step right up!" and buy

a ticket to the Greatest Show on Earth—the Big Top, containing death-defying stunts, dancing bears, roaring tigers, and trumpeting elephants. The circus has always been home to the dazzling and the exotic, the improbable and the impossible—a place of myth and romance, of reinvention, rebirth, second acts, and new identities. Asking why we long to soar on flying trapezes, ride bareback on

spangled horses, and parade through the streets in costumes of glitter and gold, this captivating book illuminates the history of the circus and the claim it has on the imaginations of artists, writers, and people around the world. Traveling back to the circus's early days, Linda Simon takes us to eighteenth-century hippodromes in Great Britain and intimate one-ring circuses

in nineteenth-century Paris, where Toulouse-Lautrec and Picasso became enchanted with aerialists and clowns. She introduces us to P. T. Barnum, James Bailey, and the enterprising Ringling Brothers and reveals how they created the golden age of American circuses. Moving forward to the whimsical Circus Oz in Australia and to New York City's Big

Apple Circus and the grand spectacle of Cirque du Soleil, she shows how the circus has transformed in recent years. At the center of the story are the people—trick riders and tightrope walkers, sword swallows and animal trainers, contortionists and clowns—that created the sensational, raucous, and sometimes titillating world of the circus. Beautifully illustrated and

filled with rich historical detail and colorful anecdotes, The Greatest Shows on Earth is a vibrant history for all those who have ever dreamed of running away to the circus. The Greatest Shows on Earth Legare Street Press The Greatest Shows on Earth Reaktion Books Slim Jack Betterway Books Over a half century, a small Indiana town hosts a circus troupe during the off-seasons in linked stories “as graceful as any acrobat’s high-wire act” (San Francisco Chronicle). A Story Prize Finalist From 1884 to 1939, the Great Porter Circus made the unlikely choice to winter in an Indiana town called Lima, a place that feels as classic as Sherwood Anderson's Winesburg, Ohio, and as wondrous as a first trip to the Big Top. In Lima, an elephant can change the course of a man's life—or the manner of his death. Jennie Dixianna entices men with her dazzling Spin of Death and keeps them in line with secrets locked in a cedar box. The lonely wife of the show’s manager has each room of her house painted like a sideshow banner, indulging her desperate passion for a young painter. And a former clown seeks consolation from his loveless marriage in his post-circus

job at Clown Alley Cleaners. In this collection of linked stories spanning decades, Cathy Day follows the circus people into their everyday lives and brings the greatest show on earth to the page. “[An] exquisite story collection.” —The Washington Post “Often funny, always graceful, and rich with a mix of historical and imaginative detail.” —Tim O’Brien, author of *The*

Things They Carried “Sublimely imaginative and affecting.” —The Boston Globe *The big Show. A history of the circus* Simon and Schuster An authoritative introduction to the specialised histories of the modern circus, its unique aesthetics, and its contemporary manifestations and scholarship, from its origins in commercial equestrian performance,

to contemporary inflections of circus arts in major international festivals, educational environments, and social justice settings. The Circus Age PublicAffairs A century ago, daily life ground to a halt when the circus rolled into town. Across America, banks closed, schools canceled classes, farmers left their fields, and factories shut down so that everyone

could go to the show. In this entertaining and provocative book, Janet Davis links the flowering of the early-twentieth-century American railroad circus to such broader historical developments as the rise of big business, the breakdown of separate spheres for men and women, and the genesis of the United States' overseas empire. In the process, she

casts the circus as a powerful force in consolidating the nation's identity as a modern industrial society and world power. Davis explores the multiple "shows" that took place under the big top, from scripted performances to exhibitions of laborers assembling and tearing down tents to impromptu spectacles of audiences brawling, acrobats falling, and animals rampaging.

Turning Victorian notions of gender, race, and nationhood topsy-turvy, the circus brought its vision of a rapidly changing world to spectators--rural as well as urban--across the nation. Even today, Davis contends, the influence of the circus continues to resonate in popular representations of gender, race, and the wider world. [Random Notes on the History of the Early](#)

American Circus
McFarland
From the #1 internationally bestselling author of the “lush, evocative Gothic” (The New York Times Book Review) The Doll Factory comes an atmospheric and spectacular novel about a woman transformed by the arrival of a Victorian circus of wonders—“as moving as it is deeply entertaining” (Daniel Mason, New York Times bestselling

author). Step up, step up! In 1860s England, circus mania is sweeping the nation. Crowds jostle for a glimpse of the lion-tamers, the dazzling trapeze artists and, most thrilling of all, the so-called “human wonders.” When Jasper Jupiter’s Circus of Wonders pitches its tent in a poor coastal town, the life of one young girl changes forever. Sold to the ringmaster as a “leopard

girl” because of the birthmarks that cover her body, Nell is utterly devastated. But as she grows close to the other performers, she finds herself enchanted by the glittering freedom of the circus, and by her own role as the Queen of the Moon and Stars. Before long, Nell’s fame spreads across the world—and with it, a chance for Jasper Jupiter to grow his own name and fortune. But

what happens when her fame begins to eclipse his own, when even Jasper's loyal brother Toby becomes captivated by Nell? No longer the quiet flower-picker, Nell knows her own place in the world, and she will fight for it. Circus of Wonders is a beautiful story about the "complex dance between exploitation and empowerment , and the question of what it really means to have control

over your own life" (Naomi Ishiguro, author of Escape Routes). Reaktion Books Jack Ward was an orphaned twelve year old who was raised by Mr. Martin. The circus came to town and Mr. Martin sold Jack to the circus men. After many years of this unhealthy lifestyle, Jack recovered in the hospital and his rebellious spirit was softened by God. As the book states: "If any of my readers come

to the same determination that Sally made, which was, never to encourage amusements of a sinful nature, or such as are afforded at the expense of danger and suffering to others, Aunt Fanny will not have related the story of "Slim Jack" in vain." The Collection and Its Relation to the History of the Circus London : Elek A history of the circus from its origins in the Roman times, through its

establishment in Western Europe, and to the modern day circus—absolutely diverse and captivating. Circuses have existed since Roman times, but centuries later, the circus world has never been more diverse and captivating, the global success of Cirque du Soleil testament to its enduring and universal appeal. Traditional family circuses for kids, arty cirque-style

shows for adults, circuses in tents or in theaters, circuses with animals or without, cabaret-style hybrids on the burlesque circuit—this is an expert guide to their extraordinary history and culture. The circus requires a unique type of performer, people who blend the discipline of sports stars with the razzmatazz of showbiz; itinerant but clannish entertainers who have often had

circus blood in their families for generations; world class gymnasts who risk death twice daily and help take down the big top afterwards. This history offers a journey into this unique world, each chapter an access-all-areas pass to a different circus, talking to the trapeze flyers, clowns, animal trainers, and showmen about their lives, work, families, customs, and traditions.

Ringling Circus Museum
Cambridge University Press

This book examines how circus and circus imaginary have shaped the historical avant-gardes at the beginning of the 20th century and the cultures they help constitute, to what extent this is a mutual shaping, and why this is still relevant today. This book aims to produce a better sense of the artistic work and cultural achievements that have emerged from the interplay of circus and avant-garde artists and projects, and to clarify both their transhistorical and trans-medial presence, and their scope for interdisciplinary expansion. Across 14 chapters written by leading scholars – from fields as varied as circus, theatre and performance studies, art, media studies, film and cultural history – some of which are written together with performers and circus practitioners, the book examines to what extent circus and avant-garde connections contribute to a better understanding of early 20th century artistic movements and their enduring legacy, of the history of popular entertainment, and the cultural relevance of circus arts. Circus and the

<p>Avant-Gardes elucidates how the realm of the circus as a model, or rather a blueprint for modernist experiment, innovation and (re)negotiation of bodies, has become fully integrated in our ways of perceiving avant-gardes today. The book does not only map the significance of circus/avant-</p>	<p>garde phenomena for the past, but, through an exploration of their contemporary actualisations (in different media), also carves out their achievements, relevance, and impact, both cultural and aesthetic, on the present time. <u>The Circus in America</u> Bard Graduate Center Featuring</p>	<p>archival photography, this text documents a wide variety of ephemera, images and artefacts relating to the history of the circus in New York City, from the seminal equestrian displays of the 18th century to the iconic American railroad circus advertisements of the late 19th century and beyond.</p>
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