



BHC-MSS 0015  
Guide to the Norwood Collection of Circus Photographs  
By Meghan Rinn  
2018

**Descriptive Summary**

**Creator:** Unknown

**Title:** Norwood Collection of Circus Photographs

**Dates:** 1870s-1940s [bulk 1900-1940]

**Quantity:** 12 manuscript boxes

**Abstract:** The Norwood Collection of Circus Photographs featured a wide array of images from mostly the 1900s to the 1940s, documenting circus life. It focuses primarily on the Ringling Brothers Barnum and Bailey Circus, and shows not only animal and human performers, but features behind the scenes images that give a greater view into what was life for those who traveled with the group every year.

**Language:** English

**Repository:** Bridgeport History Center

**Biographical History:**

At present, the Bridgeport History Center does not know who “Norwood” refers to and can offer no biographical information on the name. This mystery mirrors that of the Gordy Collection of Circus Photographs.

**Scope and Content Note:**

The Norwood Collection of Circus Photographs featured a wide array of images from mostly the 1900s to the 1940s, documenting circus life. It focuses primarily on the Ringling Brothers Barnum and Bailey Circus, and shows not only animal and human performers, but features behind the scenes images that give a greater view into what was life for those who traveled with the group every year.

Most photographs contain no additional contextual information on the back. However, this is not always true and it is possible to get a rough date range for the overall collection.

Prominent are photographs of circus animals, with the elephants taking up the most space. See arrangement note for additional details.

**Arrangement note:**

The Norwood Collection of Circus Photographs had tabs between each section, and the labels of those groupings have been maintained. However, the photographs have severely curved over time, meaning that they require more room and do not easily fit into archival folders. Because of this, archival folders are used to separate out each section, but do not house photographs themselves.

**Administrative information:**

**Provenance:** Unknown

**Preferred Citation:**

Norwood Collection of Circus Photographs (BHC-MSS 0015), Bridgeport History Center.

**Names and Subject Tracings***Corporate Names*

Barnum & London Circus

Barnum and Bailey

Barnum and Bailey--History.

Barnum and Bailey--People--1890-1900.

Barnum and Bailey--People--1900-1910.

Ringling Brothers Barnum and Bailey Circus

Ringling Brothers Barnum and Bailey Combined Shows--1920-1930.

*Subject headings*

Circus animals--1870-1880.

Circus animals--Pictorial works.

Circus animals--United States--History--19th century.

Circus animals--United States--History--20th century.

Circus owners.

Circus performers--1870-1880.

Circus performers--1880-1890.

Circus performers--1890-1900.

Circus performers--1900-1910.

Circus performers--1910-1920.

Circus performers--1920-1930.

Circus performers--United States.

Entertainers--1840-1890.

Entertainers--1890-1900.

Entertainers--1900-1920.

Elephant trainers

Women circus performers

*Genres*

Photographs.

**Detailed box and folder listing**

Box 1

1. Bears

2. Behind the scenes

3. Boar and bison

Box 2

1. Camels

2. Clowns

Box 3

1. Dogs
2. Elephants

Box 4

1. Elephants

Box 5

1. Elephants
2. Giraffes

Box 6

1. Giraffes
2. Gorillas

Box 7

1. Gorillas
2. Hippos
3. Leopards

Box 8

1. Lions
2. Llamas

Box 9

1. Monkeys
2. Ostriches
3. Panthers
4. Parade
5. People

Box 10

1. Rhinos
2. Tableaux

Box 11

1. Tents
2. Tigers
3. Woodchucks
4. Zebras

Box 12.

1. Cardboard backed photographs of behind the scenes at various circuses, 1948-1957