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 to 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