



All questioners must furnish their full name and address in order to obtain an answer to their question. This should be included as a part of the letter. Addresses on the envelope often become lost or detached from the letter. A self addressed stamped envelope will also speed service and help your CMB on expenses.

In the June-July 1975 number, questions 3 and 16 and photo number 5 [p. 5] raise the issue of rhinos and rhino cages on the Ringling-Barnum show in the years after World War II.

A- Richard Reynolds writes, I believe I have most of the details about that subject. Cage No. 82 pictured on page 9 of the June-July issue was not the rhino cage. True, there was a rhino cage with that same number, but it was an entirely different wagon.

The No. 82 shown in the June-July issue was one of three cages built new at Sarasota in 1944. The other two were Nos. 80 and 85. Number 80 was a duplicate of No. 82 but No. 85 was a big, new hippo den. As far as I can determine, this particular cage No. 82 was last on the road in 1948

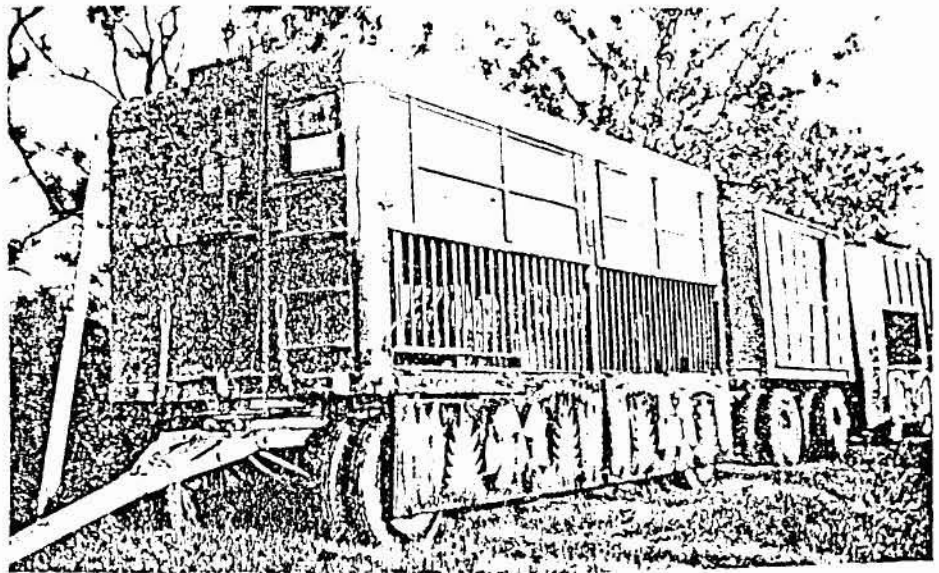


Photo #2 — RBBB rhino cage No. 82 in 1955 with pair of African black rhinos "Bill", and "Lil". Sides and ends of cage are painted green. Lower corners and floor line are painted a darker green. The palm tree on upper corner is yellow on a sky-blue background. Roof line is painted sky-blue. Number on end is painted yellow with white shading. Photo by John Cutler.

when it was painted yellow with blue trim and carried a pair of lions. It was discarded in favor of the short ex-Army wagons which the show converted into cages for the 1949 season. Thus, No. 82 shown in the June-July issue was on the show for only five seasons (1944-1948), and it never carried the rhino.

What about that ungainly beast? In 1935 Ringling-Barnum started the season with two African black rhinos, a male named "Bill" and a female named "Mary". I believe "Bill" traveled in Cage No. 78, and I think "Mary" was in No. 74, as those cages had been used for the rhinos in 1932. Neither animal survived the '35 season; "Mary" died in July in Springfield, Massachusetts and "Bill" near the end of the season in Knoxville, Tennessee. For

the next nine seasons, Ringling-Barnum toured without a rhino. Then, in 1945 the show purchased a young male African black rhino that had been born in the Brookfield Zoo, Chicago, on September 21, 1944. Named "Bobby" the 21 month old animal arrived on the show during the stand in Washington, D.C. in June, 1945. He was put into hippo cage wagon No. 85 which had been built brand new the year before. To accommodate the young rhino, the hippo's water tank was planked over. The same arrangement was used in 1946. In 1948 for sure, and I think in '47 too, rhino "Bobby" used the old rhino cage wagon No. 78. According to Gordon Potter, that wagon was built way back in 1924 to house the Great Indian "armored" rhino exhibited by Ringling-Barnum in those days. In 1948, the last time rhino cage No. 78 was on the road, it was painted blue with silver scroll work. This I remember well.

Now we come to the new rhino cage which was also assigned No. 82. It first turned up in 1949 and was used for all the rhinos exhibited by Ringling-Barnum since then. Photo No. 1 shows No. 82 being loaded onto the train in Sarasota to begin the 1950 season. African rhino "Bobby" toured with the show that year as he did every season from 1945 until his death on the road, with the show, at Baltimore, Maryland in 1953.

Ringling-Barnum did not have a rhino in 1954 so cage No. 82 stayed in the barn. I saw No. 82 at Sarasota in the Spring of 1955, and it had just been painted in two tones of green with trim painted blue, yellow, and white. When the show started out for New York that Spring, No. 82 rode the train empty to Madison Square Garden where it was to meet its new occupants, a pair of young African black rhinos dubbed

195.



Photo #1 — Ringling-Barnum rhino cage No. 82 being loaded onto the flats at Sarasota to begin the 1950 season. Note the jungle theme drawn on the end of the cage wagon. Dyer Reynolds photo/Al Conover collection.

"Bill" and "Lil" [see photo #2]. This fine young pair of rhinos traveled in cage No. 82 in both 1955 and 1956. I believe this was the only time in circus history that two rhinos were exhibited in the same cage wagon.

Ringling-Barnum's history as an under canvas show came to a close in mid-1956, but a somewhat limited menagerie was shown for a number of years at Madison Square Garden. For 1957, the rhino cage, carrying only one of the two animals, was sent up to New York and returned to Sarasota with the rest of the menagerie after the second stand at Boston Garden. In 1958, rhino cage No. 82, carrying the male "Bill" left Sarasota for the Garden never to return again. Following the New York run, the rhino and several other animals were loaned to the zoo at Pawtucket, Rhode Island, where they were to be exhibited until time for the next circus engagement at the Garden. "Bill" died at Pawtucket before Ringling-Barnum returned to New York in 1959. In the meantime, the female "Lil," which had been left at Sarasota winter quarters in 1958, was sold to the Memphis, Tennessee Zoo and was sent there in August, 1959 where she lived until her death in March, 1966.

Now, what happened to rhino cage No. 82? As far as I can determine, it was moved in 1960 from Pawtucket to Bob Dietch's Kiddie Zoo in Fairlawn, New Jersey. Beginning that year, Mr. Dietch's zoo replaced Pawtucket as the repository of the menagerie animals Ringling-Barnum maintained for its annual New York stand. When Bill Elbirn caught the show at the Garden in 1961, No. 82 was not among the 11 cages in the menagerie. Later in 1961 Bill visited the Dietch Zoo

and photographed ex-rhino den No. 82 [see photo #3]. I do not know whether it was ever used to exhibit animals in Madison Square Garden. In May, 1967, Bob Dietch told me that he still had No. 82 at his zoo, and that is my last information about the Ringling-Barnum rhino cage.

Thank you Richard for this detailed explanation.

Q-2 In the February-March 1975 issue we published a record of the RBBB train colors from 1940 through 1950.

A- Since then I have received some corrections from several members. I believe that I now have the full and complete record which I will now publish;

1940-41-42-43

Flats-silver with red letters

Stocks- silver; letter board over the windows red; letters white, baseboard red

Coaches-silver; letter board over windows red; letters silver; window sill stripe red

1944-45

Flats- yellow; letters red

Stocks- yellow; ends, roofs and letters red

Coaches- red; letters gold; roofs silver

1946-47

Flats- yellow; letters red

Stocks- yellow; letters red

Coaches- red; letters gold

1948-49-50 [and through 1956]

Flats- silver; letters red

Stocks- silver; letters red

Coaches- silver; letterboard red; letters white or silver; car # and name red

Q3- What was the coloring of the bodies and the vertical stripes of the 1956 RBBB ticket wagons? T.R.A.

A- I don't have any color photos or other data that can answer this one. Can any member help?

Q4- This is to follow up on Q6 about the 1947 RBBB train in the June-July 1975 issue.

A- The 108 cars in the 1947 RBBB train were divided as follows; 13 stocks, 53 flats (the same as in '41), 39 coaches and 3 advance.

Q5- Do you have a picture of Sells-Floto cage #29 during the late 1920's? H.K.S.

A- I do not have any photos of this particular cage. Records, however, indicate that it was 15'9" long and had three arches. In 1929 it carried one brown and two polar bears.

Q6- I'm looking for pictures of the RBBB Mack #138, the right side, and also of any of the older wooden bodied Macks. Can you help me? H.K.

A- Unfortunately I have practically no photos of the earlier Macks. Is there any member who would be willing to lend us any of these.

Q7- In the April-May 1975 issue Q1 stated that only in its later years under canvas did RBBB horses face the sidewall.

A- Gordon Potter corrects us. "My answer is for the 1919-'37 period. During this time they had a ring stock tent with four center poles and five push poles (there were three sections of canvas, one push pole in the center section and two push poles in the first and third sections). There were no quarter poles, but there were four rows of horses, with mangers on the center and push poles and on the side poles. So a row of horses was looking out along both sides of the top around the ends." See photo #4. I might also add that an aerial view of RBBB taken in 1923, see photo #5, showed that the ring stock top had only three center poles with two middle pieces, each with two push poles.

Q8- In connection with the recent questions about "end running" flat cars we have some additional comments.

A- Al House writes to say that Cole Bros. Circus did this on occasion, he believes, and has a picture of them unloading at Easton, Pa., in 1950. There are two cuts of flats and the big top pole wagon is the first wagon off the flats, pulled by a tractor, in one of the cuts. He says that it is inconceivable to him that the pole wagon was loaded in the middle of the cut and with this I agree. He also points out that an article in The White Tops several years ago stated that Dailey Bros. Circus always did this for they had only one set of runs. Thank you Al. Also prompted by this controversy we have a lengthy disser-

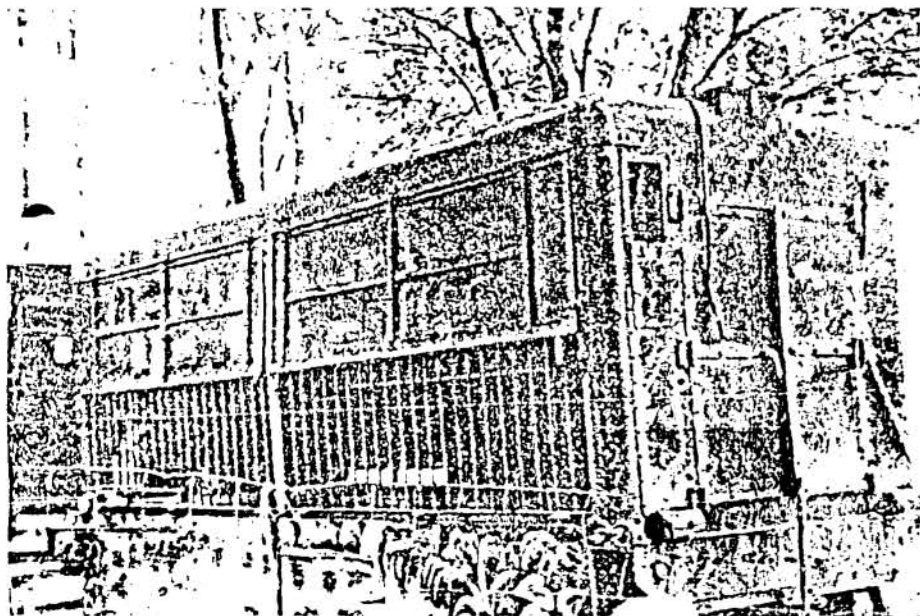


Photo #3 — Former Ringling-Barnum rhino cage No. 82 at Bob Dietch's Kiddie Zoo, Fairlawn, New Jersey in 1961. Its occupant appears to be a lion named "Buster". Photo by William Elbirn.