

Sonderdruck aus:

Der Zoologische Garten

Band 34, Heft 6, 1967

Akademische Verlagsgesellschaft Geest & Portig K.-G., Leipzig

Satz und Druck: (IV/54) Buchdruckerei Paul Dännhaupt, Köthen

Some Photographs of Rhinos Exhibited by American Circuses Between 1855 and 1926

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With 5 figures

The accompanying photographs show three of the rhinoceroses which were exhibited by American circuses in years gone by.

Before commenting on the subject matter of these figures, the writer would like to extend special thanks to LEONARD V. FARLEY of San Antonio, Texas and to JOHN C. KUNZOG of Jamestown, New York. Mr. FARLEY, as curator of the HERTZBERG Circus Collection of the San Antonio, Texas Public Library, located the 100 year old photograph among the DAN RICE files of the HERTZBERG collection and generously contributed a copy for the writer's use. Mr. KUNZOG has spent almost a lifetime accumulating data about the showman, DAN RICE. In 1962 Mr. KUNZOG wrote and published a wonderful biography of the great jester and showman entitled, "The One Horse Show, The Life and Times of DAN RICE, Circus Jester and Philanthropist, A Chronicle of Early Circus Days" (Library of Congress Catalog Card No. 62-17388). Without the information generously provided by Mr. KUNZOG in his biography, as well as in correspondence and conversation with the writer, the following details about the DAN RICE rhino would not have been available.

Figure or Photo Nr. 1 shows the male Great Indian rhino "*Old Put*" which DAN RICE owned between 1855 and 1861. DAN RICE (1823-1900, born DANIEL McLAREN) was probably the most versatile of the 19th century American showmen. Throughout an exciting career which reached its zenith during the 1860s, he was a noted singing and talking clown, an exhibitor of trained animals, and a circus proprietor. According to JOHN KUNZOG the man in the photograph is not DAN RICE.¹

"*Old Put*" was sold to RICE by an association of New York State showmen popularly known as the "Flatfoots"² because they "put their foot down flat" when competitors tried to exhibit in their territory.³

¹ KUNZOG, JOHN C., Jamestown, New York, (in litt.), 4 March 1966.

² KUNZOG, JOHN C., Jamestown, New York, (in litt.), 11 February and 4 March, 1966. Also, KUNZOG, JOHN C., "The One Horse Show, The Life And Times Of Dan Rice, Circus Jester and Philanthropist, A Chronicle Of Early Circus Days", Jamestown, New York: John C. Kunzog, publisher, 1962, p. 115.

³ For a discussion of the Flatfoot shows, their origins, and principal proprietors

During the 1830s—1850s the Flatfoots bought, sold, controlled, and operated many circuses and menageries. This was the first really powerful circus syndicate in America. The Flatfoot group of menageries and circuses appears to have been originated just prior to 1820 by a group of showmen, most of



Fig. 1. "Old Pat", the trained Great Indian Rhinoceros who was a feature of the DAN RICE Circus, U.S.A. from 1855 to 1861. This photograph is more than 100 years old. (Photograph through the courtesy of the HERTZBERG Circus Collection of the San Antonio, Texas, Public Library, U.S.A.)

whom resided in Westchester and Putnam Counties, New York, an area just north of New York City. In the 1820s and 1830s they used the name "Zoological Institute" and had permanent exhibition quarters at 37 Bowery in New York City. During the summer they operated traveling shows employing numerous colorful titles.

Membership in the Flatfoot organization appears to have been quite fluid, but most of the leading circus personalities of the New York-New England area in the 1820s—1850s appear to have been involved at one time or the other. This association of New York showmen was certainly the most im-

Continuation footnote (3)

and managers, the writer has relied on, and recommends, the following: CHINDAHL, GEORGE L., "A History of the Circus in America", Caldwell, Idaho: The Caxton Printers Ltd., 1959, p. 29—41; DURANT, JOHN and ALICE, "Pictorial History of the American Circus", New York: A. S. Barnes and Company, 1957, p. 25—39; MAY, EARL CHAPIN, "The Circus From Rome To Ringling", New York, New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1963, p. 23—48; MURRAY, MARIAN, "Circus! From Rome To Ringling", New York, New York: Appleton-Century-Crafts, Inc., 1956, p. 128—141; VALL, R. W. C., "Random Notes on the History of the Early American Circus", Barre, Massachusetts: Barre Gazette, 1956, p. 36—37.

portant firm in the wild animal business in America before the Civil War of 1861—1865.⁴

The Association and some of its members and employees who broke away and became competitors even sent expeditions to Africa and Asia to purchase and collect wild animals.⁵ These showmen imported such rarities as the now extinct Quagga (*Equus quagga*) which, according to a very accurate and well drawn poster, was exhibited in "The Association's Celebrated and Extensive Menagerie and Aviary from their Zoological Institute in the City of New York, embracing all the subjects of natural history, as exhibited at that popular and fasionable resort during the winter of 1834—5."⁶

In 1837, General RUFUS WELCH, one of the Association's members, turned competitor, imported three giraffes from Capetown. They were the first ever seen alive in America.⁷ In the 1850s another "Flatfoot" GEORGE F. BAILEY, in association with G. C. QUICK, exhibited the first hippopotamus ever seen in America.⁸

According to JOHN KUNZOG, the rhino "*Old Put*" was acquired by the Flatfoots a "few seasons" prior to 1855.⁹ Hence, his exact date of arrival is uncertain. It is conceivable that "*Old Put*" was one of the very first rhinos imported into America. According to the circus historian R. W. G. VAIL, the earliest reference to a rhino in America occurs in 1826. A "unicorn or one horned rhinoceros" was exhibited at PEALE'S Museum in New York on October 16th of that year. The same or another animal was exhibited at 350 Broadway, New York City, during June and July, 1829.¹⁰

On May 9, 1830 another Indian rhino is said to have arrived in America. This animal, a male, was exhibited at the Washington Gardens, Tremont Street, Boston, Massachusetts on May 14, 1830. He was next exhibited by the American National Caravan, one of the "Flatfoot" traveling shows. This rhino is the chief subject of a colorful poster depicting the wonders exhibited by that menagerie in 1831. In fact this is the oldest American circus poster known to exist today.¹¹ The poster contains a good drawing of an Indian rhino,

⁴ VAIL, R. W. G., op. cit. p. 36—37.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ This poster is reproduced on page 27 of DURANT'S "Pictorial History of the American Circus" and in the illustrations section of VAIL'S "Random Notes on the History of the Early American Circus" (see footnote (3) supra).

⁷ STURTEVANT, C. G., "The Giraffe In The Circus Menagerie," "White Tops", Rochelle, Ill., Vol. 4, No. 10, Feb. 1931, p. 8. See also CHINDAHL, GEORGE L., op. cit. p. 37 and VAIL, R. W. G., op. cit. p. 22. Note: Both EARL CHAPIN MAY and MARIAN MURRAY wrote in their books (footnote (3) supra) at pages 45 and 134, respectively, that the Flatfoot STEBBINS JUNE, and not RUFUS WELCH, went to Africa for these giraffes. However, all authorities agree that 1837 was the year that the first giraffes reached America.

⁸ CHINDAHL, GEORGE L., op. cit. p. 36 and VAIL, R. W. G., op. cit. p. 21—22.

⁹ At pages 115—117 of his book "The One-Horse Show ..." (footnote (2) supra). JOHN KUNZOG tells how DAN RICE acquired the rhino.

¹⁰ VAIL, R. W. G., op. cit. p. 21 and 37—38.

¹¹ Ibid.

followed by a general description of the family *Rhinocerotidae* that concludes as follows:

"The one now offered for inspection is the first living rhinoceros ever brought to America. He is in excellent condition, possesses surprising strength, and is docile and obedient to his keeper. He was taken at the foot of one of the Himalayan (sic) Mountains, near a branch of the Ganges when he was judged to be about three months old, sent to a Rajah or native Prince of Calcutta, from whom it was purchased in January, 1830 and landed in Boston on the 9th of May following".¹²



Fig. 2. Male Great Indian Rhinoceros, "Old Bill" who traveled with the circuses owned by the RINGLING Brothers, from about 1907 to 1926. Phot.: H. A. ATWELL

Of course, the boast that this was the "first" rhino in America is inconsistent with the fact, noted above, that rhinos were exhibited in New York in 1826 and again in 1829. All these rhinos may have been one and the same, for circus men of that time were notorious braggarts in their claims about the rarity, size, and ferocity of their animals.

¹² This poster is reproduced on page 31 of DURANT's "Pictorial History of the American Circus" and also in the illustrations section of VAIL's "Random Notes on the History of the Early American Circus" (see footnote (3) supra).

In any event, the 1830 rhino was apparently still living in 1834—35 because it is figured on the same Zoological Institute poster that contains the afore-said drawing of the quagga.¹³ As for the rhino, another 1834—35 poster advertising this same menagerie describes it as follows:

"The unicorn, or rhinoceros, mentioned in Scripture ... now offered for exhibition is seven years old, and is the first ever brought to America ... Its present weight is about 4,200 pounds. The growth of its horn is much retarded as it continually thumps its head against the bars of its cage."¹⁴

Could this be the same animal sold to DAN RICE twenty years later? This is a possibility, for the animal would have been only 26 or 27 years old in 1855, and many Indian rhinos have lived that long in captivity. Of course your writer is engaging in pure speculation, for by the 1850s there were a number of rhinos owned by the American showmen. Herr DRIESBACH had one in his menagerie (species unknown), and it died in New York City on March 13, 1854.¹⁵ In 1850 and 1852 the menageries operated by the partners JAMES R. RAYMOND and NOELL E. WARING claimed a rhinoceros as a feature attraction. A colorful advertisement for the 1852 season identifies the RAYMOND and WARING rhino as a "unicorn" indicating that it was *Rh. unicornis*.¹⁶ In November of 1855 SETH B. HOWE'S menagerie was sold at auction in New York City, and a rhino (species unknown) was purchased by the famous P. T. BARNUM for the low price of \$ 575.00.¹⁷ As a consequence, we see that rhinos were well known to Americans by the 1850s.

Getting back to "Old Put," the subject of photo No. 1, JOHN KUNZOG'S biography says that he was vicious, had killed one keeper, injured several others, and by 1855 had been retired to the Flatfoot's farm in Putnam County, New York from which he was given the name "Old Put."¹⁸

¹³ See footnote (6), supra.

¹⁴ VAIL, R. W. G., op. cit. p. 40—41.

¹⁵ KUNZOG, JOHN C., Jamestown, New York (in litt.) 4 March 1966 after "Gleason's Pictorial," 8 April, 1854.

¹⁶ CHINDAHL, GEORGE L., "The Circus in Early Chicago," "White Tops," Rochelle, Ill., Vol. 27, No. 6, Nov-Dec., 1954, pp. 3 and 5, and MARS, VIVIENNE, "Catching The Raymond & Waring Shows, 1829—1854," "White Tops", Vol. 28, No. 2, Mar.-Apr., 1955, p. 9.

¹⁷ KUNZOG, JOHN C., Jamestown, New York (in litt.) 4 March 1966 after "Ballou's Weekly".

¹⁸ JOHN KUNZOG'S biography "The One Horse Show ...", p. 115 (see footnote (2) supra) says "Old Put" was a black rhino. Initially therefore, the writer was concerned that RICE might have had two rhinos, (1) a true African black rhino, *Diceros bicornis*, who was "Old Put," and (2) the *Rh. unicornis* that is shown in the accompanying photo. The writer discussed this matter with Mr. KUNZOG, and he said the identification of "Old Put" as a black rhino was not based on scientific reference. It came from circus advertising materials of the time (1850s—1860s). Mr. KUNZOG had not seen this or any other picture of "Old Put" when the biography was written. Hence he had to rely on the circus publicity materials and, to use Mr. KUNZOG'S words, "the publicity agent probably used the word black because of the animal's dark color or because of the public appeal of that word." In any event, both Mr. KUNZOG and the writer are reasonably certain that RICE never had but one performing rhino, and in light of the accompanying photo one must conclude that "Old Put" was a fine example of *Rh. unicornis*.

The sale of "Old Put" to DAN RICE was negotiated in early 1855 by AVERY SMITH, one of the members of the Flatfoot organization.¹⁹ RICE bought the animal for \$ 700.00 and paid for its transportation from Putnam County, New York to his own farm and winter quarters at Girard, Pennsylvania, a small town approximately fifteen miles west of Erie. The arrival of a rhinoceros in this small Pennsylvania town must have caused a sensation for the land on which "Old Put" was quartered in, according to JOHN KUNZOG, still known as Rhinoceros Hollow.

The indomitable RICE lost no time in making "Old Put" the star of his circus. By placing thimbles on his fingers and using a series of clicks to which the rhino became conditioned, RICE was able to train his rhino. As far as the writer knows, "Old Put" was the first performing rhino in modern circus history.²⁰

Mr. KUNZOG's biography of RICE gives the following account of "Old Put's" routine in the circus arena:

"RICE made his entrance, followed at a distance of ten feet by the rhinoceros, heavily shackled and led by an attendant. The chains were removed as the animal entered the ring. A pair of platform stairs, three steps in height, were placed in the ring which *Old Put* would ascend and standing at the top would let out a deafening

¹⁹ There are references which indicate that the HOWES Brothers, NATHAN and SETH B., had an interest in "Old Put" before he was sold to DAN RICE. This is somewhat confusing. While originally members of the association of showmen known as the "Flatfoots," it is the writer's impression that by the 1850s, the HOWES had left the Flatfoots and were actually competitors (SETH HOWES was probably the most successful of all these early showmen). Of course, there was such a confusion of sales, trades, mergers, and leases between these showmen that the entire picture is clouded. Be this as it may, Mr. KUNZOG assures the writer that before his sale to RICE, "Old Put" had been retired to the Flatfoot farm in Putnam County, N. Y. and was definitely sold to RICE by the Flatfoot, AVERY SMITH.

²⁰ As far as the writer knows there has only been one other performing rhino in the history of the American circus. According to the late circus historian, C. G. STURTEVANT, the MAGINLEY & Co. show of 1874 had a trained rhino. In "Circus Menageries," *Billboard*, Cincinnati, Ohio, 13 June 1925, page 76, Mr. STURTEVANT says this rhino was brought into the performance and handled with a long pole inserted into a ring in the beast's nose. This may be the same rhino which C. P. FOX of Oconomowoc, Wisconsin said (in litt. 11th Sept. 1959) is figured in 1865 advertisements for MAGINLEY & Co.'s Royal Circus & British Museum & Menagerie.

The writer finds two references to performing rhinos in European circuses. In "The Nature Of The Beast," New York, New York: Crown Publishers, 1960, p. 120, HANS BRICK describes an exciting and exotic group that he once trained and exhibited with the circus NOVACEK and RICHTER on a tour in Egypt and the Far East. The group featured a rhino (species unidentified) with a macaw on his back, a hippopotamus, two goats, a giraffe (with a chimpanzee as a jockey), and an Indian tapir. On August 25, 1966, MARVIN L. JONES of Redstone Arsenal, Alabama advised the writer that the Swiss Circus KNIE was then training a pair of white rhinos (*Diceros simus*) to appear in its performance.

There have also been several captive rhinos used in motion pictures, both American and European. However, as far as the writer knows these animals were never used for circus type performances.

bellow when RICE asked: 'Did I train you to obey my commands?' While the animal stood on the platform RICE lighted some red fire inside a small paper house. 'Fire', he yelled, 'ring the bell!' At which command the animal clambered down from the steps, ran to a rod on which hung a swinging bell and would toll it with his horn. This alarm brought out the clown fire department riding in a pig drawn cart.

This scene was followed by DAN RICE walking around the ring, followed at a short distance by the rhinoceros. Divesting himself of his coat, a large handkerchief was observed to protrude from his hip pocket. The animal increased its pace, seized the kerchief in its mouth, when attendants placed an inverted wooden tub between RICE and the animal. Turning around, RICE placed one foot on the tub, and looking at the rhinoceros now standing on the other side, he would say: 'Put, you old scamp; you have stolen my kerchief. Return it, I say.'

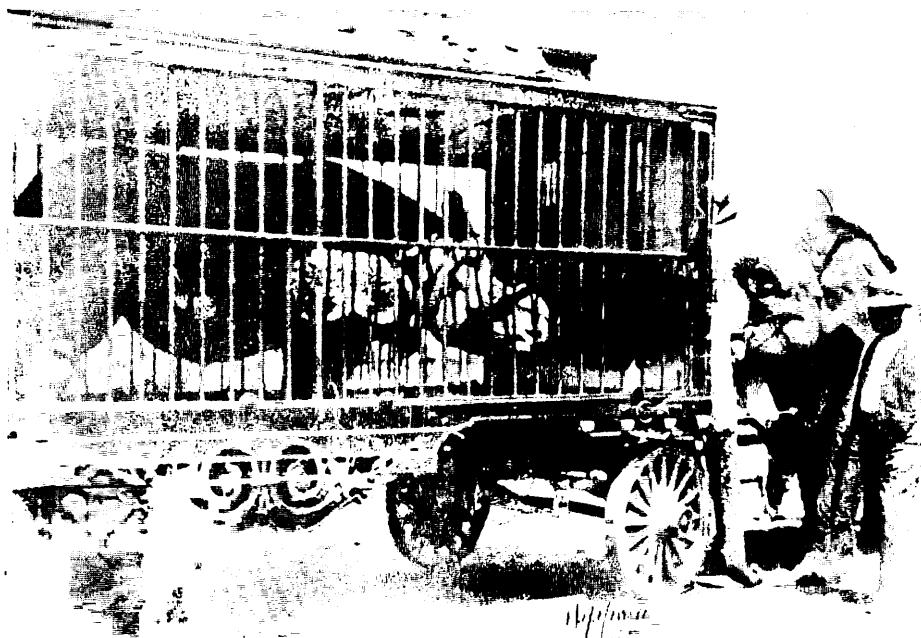


Fig. 3. Indian Rhino, "OLD BILL", in his traveling cage wagon. The den is being moved by an Asiatic elephant named "John" who, for many years, pushed the cage wagons into exact positions for exhibition in the circus menagerie. The photograph was probably taken on the RINGLING BROS. BARNUM & BAILEY Circus around 1920. Phot.: H. A. ATWELL.

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But the animal merely stood there looking at RICE, sometimes emulating its preceptor by also placing a foot on the tub. DAN repeated the request for the kerchief several times to no avail, and then, standing erect, he clicked his heels together, gave a smart military salute and said: 'General PUTNAM, sir; I have come for the return of the kerchief'.

Upon being so addressed the rhinoceros opened its mouth and the kerchief fell upon the tub and the two performers bowed to the plaudits of the spectators. On leaving the ring, shackles were again placed on the animal, which was then led out of the tent."²¹

²¹ KUNZIG, JOHN C., "The One Horse Show ..." p. 116—117 (see footnote (2) supra).

The unpredictable and irascible temperament of the rhino, together with its well known proclivity to run amuk like a juggernaut, must have made its appearance without shackles in an open and unprotected circus ring a risky business for both trainer and patrons.

JOHN KUNZOG's biography describes an attack by "*Old Put*" on RICE during an afternoon performance at Buffalo, New York on August 7, 1857, to-wit:

"In a snort of anger the animal threw RICE fifteen feet into the air and as he landed, a screaming audience was on the verge of panic while the unfettered beast roared defiance and trod about the ring. The showman leaped to his feet, whipped a large kerchief from his pocket, and rushing up to the snorting animal he dropped it over its eyes. With vision obscured, the rhinoceros became docile as a lamb and RICE signaled an attendant. Shackles were placed on the brute, which was then meekly led from the ring. With animal under control, the excitement in the seats subsided and RICE exited to ascertain extent of his hurts, while other performers appeared in the ring to avoid a break in the program. Fifteen minutes later RICE returned, bowed, and announced no broken bones or serious injuries, receiving a hearty applause at this announcement. The rhinoceros again was brought to the ring and this time went through its routine without any display of temper."²²

"*Old Put*" was certainly the greatest wild animal attraction of the time; but it all came to an end in the Mississippi River on August 18, 1861, while the DAN RICE circus was being moved by boat up the mighty river.²³ At a point between Prairie duChien and LaCrosse, Wisconsin, the barge transporting "*Old Put*" was struck by the steamboat "*Key City*" and the rhino cage was knocked into the river. Chained inside his cage by the ring in his nose, "*Old Put*" had no chance to escape. Several days later the cage containing the dead rhino was retrieved. DAN RICE had lost his famous rhino; and disconsolate, he sued the owners of the steamboat "*Key City*" for the loss of "*Old Put*."

However, the story does not end here. That season RICE had employed as publicity agent a certain Col. WILLIAM C. PRESTON who, immediately upon "*Old Put*'s" death, saw an opportunity to gain much publicity for the circus. Without regard for the truth, Col. PRESTON fabricated a story that "*Old Put*" had escaped from his cage, gotten out of the river, and proceeded to ravage the farms and terrorize the people near LaCrosse, Wisconsin. This completely false story then told how the rhino was finally captured and reunited in the circus arena with DAN RICE. The unscrupulous Col. PRESTON succeeded in persuading a number of newspapers along the Mississippi River to print this hoax, one of which was the LaCrosse "*The Weekly Democrat*."²⁴

²² KUNZOG, JOHN C., "The One Horse Show ..." p. 132 (see footnote (2) supra).

²³ At pages 190 — 191 of his book, "The One Horse Show ..." (see footnote (2) supra), JOHN KUNZOG tells about the loss of "*Old Put*."

²⁴ The unfortunate part is that Col. PRESTON's hoax has been innocently but widely circulated. It appeared in the 1946 Christmas issue of "*White Tops*," the journal of the Circus Fans Association. The writer read this erroneous account of the incident and innocently published the error in his paper, "*Asian Rhinos In Captivity*," International Zoo Yearbook, Vol. II, 1960, London: The Zoological Society of London, p. 26.

The simple truth is that America's first performing rhino went to a watery grave on August 18, 1861.

The second, third, and fourth photographs deal with the male Indian rhino "*Old Bill*", that was owned by the RINGLING Brothers and exhibited with their circuses from about 1907 until 1926.

The writer has not been able to ascertain exactly when this rhino was imported but all available evidence suggests that it was around 1907. There are

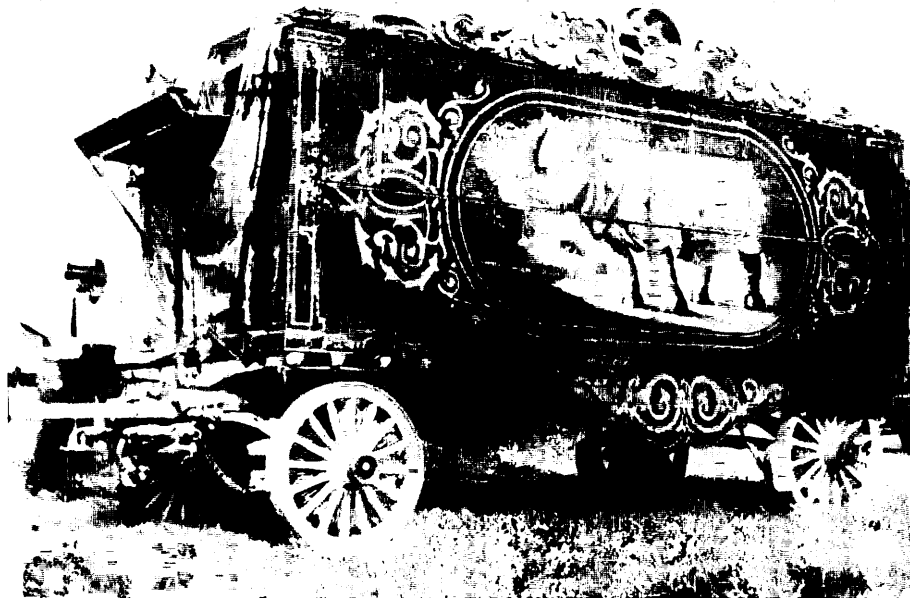


Fig. 4. Closed cage wagon containing Indian rhino, "*Old Bill*", circa 1920. To exhibit the animal, the colorful side boards were removed. This wagon was probably 16 to 18 feet long and about 8 feet wide. Phot.: Anonymous

a number of clues. When he died in 1926 the newspaper articles said he had been with circuses for 19 years, or since 1907.²⁵ Another clue is that CARL HAGENBECK imported four Indian rhinos from Nepal in the spring of 1907, only three of which have been traced to other zoos. HAGENBECK sold one to the Antwerp zoo, another to the Belle Vue Gardens, Manchester, England, and a third to the New York Zoological Park. The latter animal arrived at the Bronx zoo on 23rd July 1907.²⁶ Since the RINGLINGS were good friends of the HAGENBECKS and bought many animals from the famous German firm, it seems quite logical that "*Old Bill*" was the fourth Indian rhino imported by HAGENBECK in 1907.

²⁵ Billboard, Cincinnati, Jan. 1, 1927, p. 66 and "Fort Worth Star-Telegram" Fort Worth, Texas, September 28, 1926.

²⁶ REYNOLDS, RICHARD J., "Asian Rhinos In Captivity," International Zoo Yearbook, Vol. II, 1960, London: The Zoological Society of London, p. 24-25 and 27.

The five ambitious RINGLING Brothers, who were certainly the most successful showmen in American circus history, had, by 1908, purchased their chief competition, BARNUM & BAILEY's Greatest Show On Earth and its subsidiary, the ADAM FOREPAUGH and SELLS Brothers' circus. JAMES A. BAILEY, last of the famous partners in the BARNUM & BAILEY circus, died in 1906, and the next year his circuses were sold to the RINGLINGS. In addition to their own huge circus, RINGLING Brothers' World's Greatest Shows, the five brothers operated the BARNUM & BAILEY circus as a separate show through the 1918 season. For two years, 1910 and 1911, they also operated the ADAM FOREPAUGH and SELLS Bros. show as a separate organization. In 1919 the two big shows, BARNUM & BAILEY and RINGLING Brothers, were combined to form the RINGLING Bros. BARNUM & BAILEY Circus. It was with these circuses that "*Old Bill*" trouped for nineteen years.

The early days of this rhino's circus life are difficult to trace. He may have been exhibited first by the RINGLING Bros. show or he may have been with BARNUM & BAILEY. It is the writer's belief that he was originally with RINGLING Brothers' World's Greatest Shows,²⁷ probably in 1907 or 1908 and again in 1909. In 1910 and 1911 he was most likely switched to the subsidiary show, ADAM FOREPAUGH and SELLS Brothers. The 1910 menagerie of that circus contained an Indian rhino. Painted on the side boards of its cage wagon was the colorful title "Only Living Armored Rhinoceros In Captivity."²⁸ This almost certainly had to be the rhino in question.

When the FOREPAUGH-SELLS circus was retired at the close of the 1911 season, your writer does not know if "*Old Bill*" became a feature of the RINGLING Brothers' menagerie or whether he was sent to the BARNUM & BAILEY circus. RINGLING Brothers' advertising circulars for 1915 and 1917 refer to the "Armored" rhino as a feature of the menagerie, but the writer hesitates to rely completely on these publicity brochures. The late circus historian, WILLIAM

²⁷ NORWOOD, EDWIN P., "The Circus Menagerie", Garden City, New York: Doubleday, Doran & Company, Inc., 1929, p. 91. In his paper on Asian rhinos (see footnote (26) supra), the writer indicates "*Old Bill*" was first with the BARNUM & BAILEY Circus. This was based on correspondence with the late Col. W. H. WOODCOCK who advised the writer on 7 June 1960 that he saw the RINGLING Bros. circus in 1918, that the show did not have a rhino in its menagerie and was advised by the menagerie men that "*Old Bill*" was a BARNUM & BAILEY animal. Mr. WOODCOCK was further told that the RINGLING Brothers' show once had a female rhino named "*Mary*" (species not mentioned) and that she had died. As a consequence, Mr. WOODCOCK thought "*Old Bill*" was always with BARNUM & BAILEY, and he so stated in "Bandwagon", Vol. 4, No. 2, Mar-Apr. 1960, p. 3. However, this does not agree with NORWOOD's book, supra. In addition, at page 276-277 of MARIAN MURRAY's book (see footnote (3) supra), the authoress says JOHN RINGLING bought the Great Indian rhino. While not stated, this is at least a suggestion that the rhino was first with the RINGLING Brothers' show.

²⁸ The circus collector HAROLD DUNN of Sarasota has a photograph of the 1910 FOREPAUGH-SELLS menagerie that shows this Indian rhino cage wagon. Since this circus was organized in 1910 by the RINGLING Brothers at their Baraboo, Wisconsin winter quarters, this photo strongly suggests that the Indian rhino had been a RINGLING animal prior to 1910.

H. WOODCOCK, said that "Old Bill" was with the BARNUM & BAILEY show.²⁹ HENRY RINGLING NORTH, nephew of the original RINGLING Brothers and current vice-president of RINGLING Bros. BARNUM & BAILEY, told the writer that his best recollection is that the rhino was with BARNUM & BAILEY.³⁰

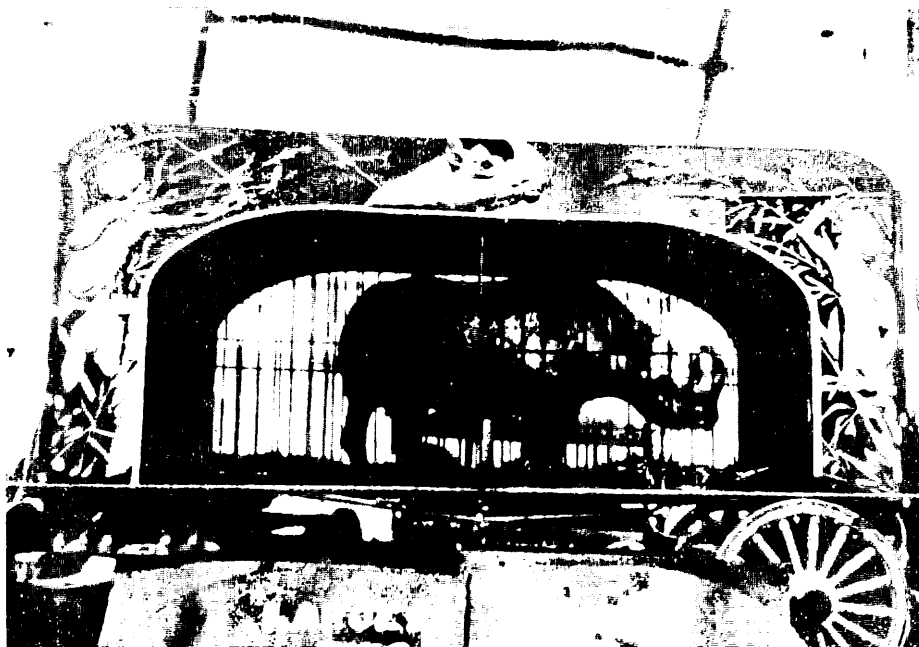


Fig. 5. Open rhino cage wagon inside the menagerie tent of the RINGLING Brothers Circus around 1900-1905. This two horned rhino may be the female *Diceros sumatrensis* which the Bronx Zoo sold to the RINGLINGS on 16 December 1902. Phot. from collection of J. T. BRADBURY, Atlanta, Ga.

Regardless of the confusion and uncertainty about "Old Bill's" early days, it is certain that in 1919 he became a feature of the combined menagerie of RINGLING Bros. BARNUM & BAILEY. He traveled with the combined show until his death on September 28, 1926 while the circus was exhibiting in Fort Worth, Texas.³¹

"Old Bill" was the last Asiatic rhino exhibited by an American circus. His remains were shipped to the Peabody Museum of Natural History, Yale Uni-

²⁹ See footnote (27) supra.

³⁰ Mr. NORTH told the writer (September 20, 1966) that he seems to recall that the old BARNUM & BAILEY show had a pair of Indian rhinos named "Bill" and "Lil" and that the male was the survivor of the pair. Mr. NORTH also makes reference to this pair in one of the June 1955 issues of "Billboard", Cincinnati, Ohio. The writer has never seen any other references to a pair of Indian rhinos with these names, although the RINGLING-BARNUM combined show had two distinct pairs of *Diceros bicornis* with these same names. The first of these pairs was exhibited in the late 1920s and early 1930s. The second pair was acquired in 1955.

³¹ REYNOLDS, RICHARD J., "Asian Rhinos In Captivity," p. 26 (see footnote (26) supra).

versity, New Haven, Connecticut. For many years, "Old Bill's" mounted skin was a prominent display at the museum.³²

The final figure shows the open rhino cage wagon inside the menagerie tent of the RINGLING Brothers' World's Greatest Show around 1900–1905.³³ The writer does not know the specific identity of this rhino. Before the RINGLINGS bought the Indian rhino "Old Bill" around 1907, they owned at least two other rhinos. The first is mentioned in the annual route books of 1894 and 1895. The species of this rhino is not certain, but the writer would speculate that it was probably an African black rhino (*Diceros bicornis*). On December 16, 1902, the RINGLINGS purchased the second of these pre-1907 rhinos. This was a female Sumatran rhino (*Didermocerus sumatraensis*) obtained from the New York Zoological Society.

The Sumatran rhino came from Perak, Malay Peninsula and arrived at the Bronx zoo on March 25, 1902.³⁴ At this time the Bronx zoo was very crowded and the rhino had to be put in an ex-orang utan cage.³⁵ Because of these conditions, the animal was sold to the circus.

So far, the last definite report of this rhino, uncovered by the writer, said that it arrived at the RINGLINGs' Baraboo, Wisconsin winter quarters and, during the early months of 1903, was settling down to a new circus life.³⁶ As a consequence, the length of its life with the circus is unknown to the writer. A 1917 advertising courier for the RINGLING Brothers' circus claims both a "Bi-Horned Rhinoceros, A Rare and Priceless Samatran (sic) Treasure" and "A Giant Armored Rhinoceros" as menagerie attractions. The author is reluctant to rely on this advertisement as conclusive proof either that the Sumatran rhino lived until 1917 or that "Old Bill," the armored rhino, was definitely with RINGLING Brothers that year. *D. sumatraensis* does not have a good record for longevity in captivity, and fifteen years would be exceptional. Further, the writer has never heard that the old RINGLING Brothers' show exhibited two rhinos at the same time as suggested by the 1917 advertisement.

Getting back to figure No. 5, the writer can not say whether the rhino is *Diceros bicornis* or *Didermocerus sumatraensis*. As noted, there were two different rhinos owned by the RINGLING Brothers around the time this photo is said to have been taken. PETER RYHINER, one of the few westerners to track and capture the Sumatran rhino in recent years, has seen this photo and believes the rhino is a Sumatran. However, in the F. W. GLASIER collection of photographs at the RINGLING Circus Museum, Sarasota, Florida, there is an excellent

³² DUNBAR, CARL O., Peabody Museum of Natural History, Yale University (in litt.), 13 June 1958 and ROBINSON, PETER, Peabody Museum of Natural History (in litt.), 2 August, 1960.

³³ This same photograph also appears on page 185 of Vol. I of HENRY THÉTARD's "La Merveilleuse Histoire du Cirque," S. Guida, Paris, 1947.

³⁴ REYNOLDS, RICHARD J., "Asian Rhinos In Captivity," p. 38 (see footnote (26) supra). See also: Bulletin New York Zoological Society, No. 7, September 1902, p. 38.

³⁵ "Rhinoceros In An Ape Cage." "New York Daily Tribune", Sunday, March 30, 1902.

³⁶ "The New York Clipper", New York, January 24, 1903, p. 1069.

photo of an African black rhino (*D. bicornis*) whose horns are shaped in the same, curious manner as those of the rhino in photo No. 5. This GLASLER photograph is unidentified as to circus but the animal certainly looks like the one in the accompanying photo. It is unfortunate that this narrative must end on this note of uncertainty. Perhaps, however, the writer or others will someday find answers to these intriguing questions.

Zusammenfassung

Der bekannte amerikanische Schausteller DAN RICE (1823—1900) zeigte in den Jahren 1855—1861 ein Panzernashorn, „*Old Put*“, das er von der Organisation „Flat-foots“ (der wichtigsten amerikanischen Schausteller- und Wildtierhandels-Gesellschaft vor dem Bürgerkrieg) für 700 Dollar erworben hatte. Die Flatfoot-Assoziation sandte bereits Tierfangexpeditionen nach Afrika und Asien und importierte u. a. die ersten Giraffen, Flußpferde und Quaggas nach Nordamerika. „*Old Put*“ dürfte eins der ersten Rhinos gewesen sein, die Amerika lebend erreichten. Bereits 1826 und 1829 war aber in New York ein „One horned Rhinoceros“ kurzfristig ausgestellt, ein weiteres, ebenfalls indisches, 1830 in Boston, wobei offenbleibt, ob es sich nicht stets um ein und dasselbe Exemplar gehandelt hat und ob „*Old Put*“ eventuell sogar identisch mit dem Bostoner Rhinoceros von 1830 war. Andererseits gab es schon um 1850 „a number of rhinos“ bei amerikanischen Schaustellern.

DAN RICE transportierte „*Old Put*“ in sein Winterquartier nach Girard, Pennsylvania. Das Nashorn wurde der Star des Zirkusunternehmens, ließ sich dressieren und herumführen und soll sogar kleine Kunststücke vollbracht haben, allerdings griff es seinen Besitzer in der Nachmittagsvorstellung des 7. VIII. 1857 in Buffalo auch einmal an, warf ihn „fünfzehn Fuß hoch in die Luft“ und rief eine Panik hervor. Diese zweifellos sensationellste Tierschau ihrer Epoche fand am 18. VIII. 1861 auf dem Mississippi ein jähes Ende, als das Boot der Wandermenagerie mit einem anderen Dampfer kollidierte und die Rhinoceros-Kiste „was knocked into the river“. Da „*Old Put*“ in seiner Kiste mit einem Nasenring festgemacht war, ertrank er im Fluß (von einem Zirkusagenten wurde allerdings eine Falschmeldung lanciert, nach der „*Old Put*“ das Land erreicht und noch tagelang die Bevölkerung terrorisiert haben sollte, bis er unter großen Gefahren wieder eingefangen werden konnte).

Ein weiteres Panzernashorn, „*Old Bill*“, gehörte der Menagerie BARNUM & BAILEY (später kombinierte Show „RINGLING Bros. und BARNUM & BAILEY Circus“). Höchstwahrscheinlich war es eines der vier von HAGENBECK 1907 aus Nepal importierten Rhinos (ein anderes kam am 23. VIII. 1907 in den Bronx Zoo). „*Old Bill*“ starb 1926, nach 19 Jahren Zirkusdasein („RINGLING Bros. World's Greatest Shows“ bis 1909, dann in verschiedenen Subunternehmen, von 1919 bis zu seinem Tod am 28. IX. 1926 in Fort Worth schließlich auf Reisen mit der kombinierten Menagerie „RINGLING Bros. BARNUM & BAILEY“). „*Old Bill*“ war das letzte von einem amerikanischen Zirkus gezeigte Panzernashorn. Bereits vor „*Old Bill*“ besaßen die RINGLINGS von 1894 bis 1895 ein (wahrscheinliches) Spitzmaulnashorn, und 1902 erwarben sie von der New York Zoological Society sogar ein weibliches Sumatra-Nashorn (aus Perak — Malayische Halbinsel am 25. III. 1902 im Bronx Zoo angekommen, aus Platzgründen aber an das Zirkusunternehmen verkauft). Es ist nicht ausgeschlossen, daß dieses Tier identisch mit dem noch 1917 in den Zirkusprospekten angepriesenen „Rare and Priceless Sumatran Treasure“ ist.

Auf die Langlebigkeit aller dieser Zirkus-Rhinos auch unter primitiven Haltungsbedingungen wird besonders hingewiesen.

Addenda

Since the writer submitted the foregoing paper, information has come to light which almost conclusively shows that the male Indian rhino, *Rh. unicornis*, "Old Bill" was purchased by the RINGLING Brothers from CARL HAGENBECK in 1907. Readers will recall the uncertainty about this matter in the foregoing text.

The circus historian SVERRER O. BRAATHEN of Madison, Wisconsin has many of the original records of the RINGLING Brothers for the years before 1919. Among these materials is a letter, dated 5th April 1907, from CARL HAGENBECK, Hamburg, Germany, to the RINGLING Brothers offering to sell them an Indian rhino. Mr. BRAATHEN has generously provided the writer with a copy of this letter, in which that famous animal dealer wrote as follows:

"... I to-day wish to let you know, that I am receiving 4 Indian Rhinoceroses of which I can offer one at the price of \$ 5,750. — f.o.b. Hoboken, you to pay the duty. The height of the animal is about 35". If you would take the animal f.o.b. Hamburg, I offer it to you at \$ 5,000. The animals are expected to arrive in Hamburg end of this month. According to the last report all of them were in good health and fine condition."

In view of this information, the writer believes the following is an accurate outline of "Old Bill's" circus career, to wit:

1907 — Purchased by RINGLING Brothers from CARL HAGENBECK.

1908—1909 — Exhibited by RINGLING Brothers' World's Greatest Shows (Winter Quarters at Baraboo, Wisconsin).

1910—1911 — Exhibited by ADAM FOREPAUGH and SELLS Brothers' Big United Shows (a subsidiary of the RINGLING circus that also wintered in Baraboo, Wisconsin).

circa 1912 — Transferred by the RINGLINGS from their own show to the BARNUM & BAILEY circus.

circa 1912—1918 — Exhibited by the BARNUM & BAILEY's Greatest Show On Earth (owned by the RINGLINGS but separately operated, with winter quarters at Bridgeport, Connecticut).

1919—1926 — Exhibited by RINGLING Bros. BARNUM & BAILEY Combined Shows. Died at Fort Worth, Texas on September 28, 1926.