

pp. 97-108 in  
Hogg & Post,  
1996

Germany, and remained abroad until his death in 1885. Alfeld is near where the brothers grew up, but, more important, it is only a hundred miles due south of the port of Hamburg, a longtime animal trading depot. The Reiches are credited with being among the first to turn the casual animal dealings at the Hamburg port into a more formalized business. The Reiches also maintained agents at principal shipping points such as Egypt and Ceylon, where their agents both recruited native hunters and arranged for shipments to Hamburg. From there, Charles forwarded animals to Henry in Hoboken, New Jersey, or to clients in Europe. By the late 1870s, Henry was no longer able to stock his Chatham Street store with all their wild cargo. Temporary storage arrangements had been made with the developing Central Park Zoo, but two acres were also acquired in Coney Island.<sup>21</sup> By 1870 the Reiche brothers were worth \$100,000 to \$150,000; thirteen years later, in 1883, their net worth reached \$300,000.<sup>22</sup>

The growth of the Reiches' business can be partially charted by the activity of Adam Forepaugh, a prominent American showman. Forepaugh began in Philadelphia as a horse dealer for streetcar lines. After selling horses to a Philadelphia circus owner in 1864, Forepaugh found himself owner of the show by the next year. Before he embarked on the tenting season of 1867, Forepaugh had bought \$35,000 worth of animals from the Reiches. By the 1875 season, Forepaugh's business with the Reiches reached \$95,000.<sup>23</sup>

For one animal dealership during a three-year period in the late 1860s, twenty lions, twelve elephants, six giraffes, four Bengal tigers, eight leopards, eight hyenas, twelve ostriches, and two hippopotami generated \$112,000 in business, or more than \$37,000 per year for large beasts alone. Smaller show



## VAN AMBURGH & CO'S

New Great Golden Menagerie also contains the largest Elephant, River Horse and Kangaroo on this Continent.

GARDNER JUNE 18

Van Amburgh and Company featured four of the principal attractions in their menagerie, including "The Only Double Horned Rhinoceros in America!" which was imported in 1872. This color poster, probably dating from the late 1870s, advertises an appearance by the menagerie in Gardner, Massachusetts, on June 18. The chromolithographed poster was printed by the Courier Company of Buffalo, New York. (Circus Galleries, John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art, Sarasota, Florida)

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beasts as well as monkeys for organ grinders and birds as domestic pets more than doubled the amount.<sup>24</sup>

The prosperity of the Reiche brothers was undoubtedly due in part to the intense competition among American showmen in the number of elephants exhibited. In 1875 P. T. Barnum and his great rival Forepaugh each owned four elephants; by 1878 the Sells brothers' circus boasted seven, the largest number of any show. The next year Forepaugh had twelve elephants, Barnum exhibited eleven, and Cooper and Bailey owned ten (including one that was pregnant and would be the first to give birth in captivity). A total of at least fifty-two circus elephants existed in the United States. In 1880 Forepaugh had eleven pachyderms, but when the large herds of the two Bailey and Barnum shows merged the next year, Forepaugh had to counter with twenty-one of his own elephants in 1882 and twenty-five by 1883.<sup>25</sup>

Competition in numbers of elephants quickly evolved into a contest for the largest elephant when the Barnum show imported Jumbo in 1882. Forepaugh countered with Bolivar (acquired from the Van Amburgh menagerie), and W. W. Cole's circus trumpeted Samson, which it purchased from the Reiche brothers. The elephant wars culminated with a battle to exhibit a white elephant, and Barnum's show secured the first genuine specimen brought to America for its traveling season of 1884. Rivals such as Forepaugh and Cole quickly countered with whitewashed elephants. "[Each declared his] to be the whitest and published convincing medical certificates to prove it," recalled one veteran circus press agent, "but the imposture was so palpable to the public that it was received as a joke. The rival managers were so serious in trying to bolster up their claims,

"THE MOTHER ELEPHANT, 'HEBE,' and her BABY, 'YOUNG AMERICA.'" The first elephant born in captivity, "Young America" weighed 214 pounds and was 35 inches high when delivered in the Philadelphia winter quarters of the Cooper and Bailey circus. *Carte de visite* photograph "from life" by A. W. Rothengatter and Co., Philadelphia, 1880. (Author's collection)

