

THE AFFAIRS OF
JAMES A. BAILEY

NEW REVELATIONS ON
THE CAREER OF

**THE WORLD'S MOST
SUCCESSFUL SHOWMAN**

BY
RICHARD E. CONOVER

Perhaps the most lucrative source of information for the reconstruction of the affairs of James A. Bailey and his business relationships with James E. Cooper, P. T. Barnum, William F. Cody, W. W. Cole, the Sells Brothers, the Adam Forepaugh Show, and Barnum & Bailey, Ltd., is the Joseph T. McCaddon Archives which have been deposited in the Princeton University Library since April 4, 1938. According to Mrs. Marguerite McAnney, Curator of the Theatre Collection, no one had ever made more than a cursory examination of the McCaddon Papers until I completed the task in October 1956. Except for some invaluable assistance from Jake Posey, the "Last of the Forty Horse Drivers," primarily in the matter of parade equipment, this pamphlet is based almost entirely upon my research at Princeton. Both Mrs. McAnney and Alexander P. Clark of the library's staff over-extended their usual excellent cooperation in assisting me in this task.

While there is enough new material presented herein to justify a more pretentious volume, the understandable reluctance of commercial publishing houses to underwrite an opus on the circus has led me to stick to the format of my 1956 publication "The Telescoping Tableaus." That effort was well received and paid off its printing and distribution costs. The drastic condensation which has been necessary to conform with the chosen format will not even permit a detailed biography of the principal or much background on any of the shows which he, at one time, controlled. To those who have no familiarity with the personalities or the properties mentioned, a supplementary chronological table is offered in the appendix. It is hoped this will suffice until the reader has an opportunity to pursue some of the references listed in the bibliography. These references are for the most part excellent treatises on their respective subjects, and there is really no virtue in rehashing any more than is necessary to frame in the new material that will not be found in any of them.

In contrast to my effort on the telescopers, where such conclusions as could be drawn were arrived at from many small bits of information, this one can be depended upon to be more authoritative as the available documentation is explicit about the terms of most of the transactions. In similarity to that previous effort, the services of my daughter Sally in editing and typing this manuscript were both required and appreciated.

All photographs are from the
Princeton University Library.

Copies of this pamphlet or "The
Telescoping Tableaus" (March 1956)
available from the author at one
dollar each.

Richard E. Conover
Route 4, Xenia, Ohio
27 July 1957

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ADDITIONAL NOTES ON "THE TELESCOPING TABLEAUS"

As was pointed out in that publication, any conclusions on that subject stand vulnerable to the admittance of new information. To those who have a copy and a further interest in the matter, this seems to be an appropriate place to report on the effect of the interim findings, extracted primarily as opportunity has permitted, from newspaper files throughout the country. My conclusion with respect to the Five Graces Bandwagon's originally being a telescoper is practically assured as being correct; but, if so, it remained as such at least through 1882. The existence of the third, and smaller, "globe tableau," discussed as a probability in the second paragraph on page six, is further substantiated. In fact, this wagon and the Golden Horse Bandwagon appear to have been companion pieces on the 1864 Howes European. However, I am currently of the opinion that neither one had telescoping mechanisms.

THE AFFAIRS OF JAMES A. BAILEY

The chronological table in the appendix lists the events in James A. Bailey's early career. As in the case of any individual, a period of time must be served as an apprentice. Eventually, for those who become famous, there comes the time when things begin to happen. Bailey's break came when he began his association with James E. Cooper which, within a few years, led up to the formation of the Cooper & Bailey Show.

COOPER & BAILEY

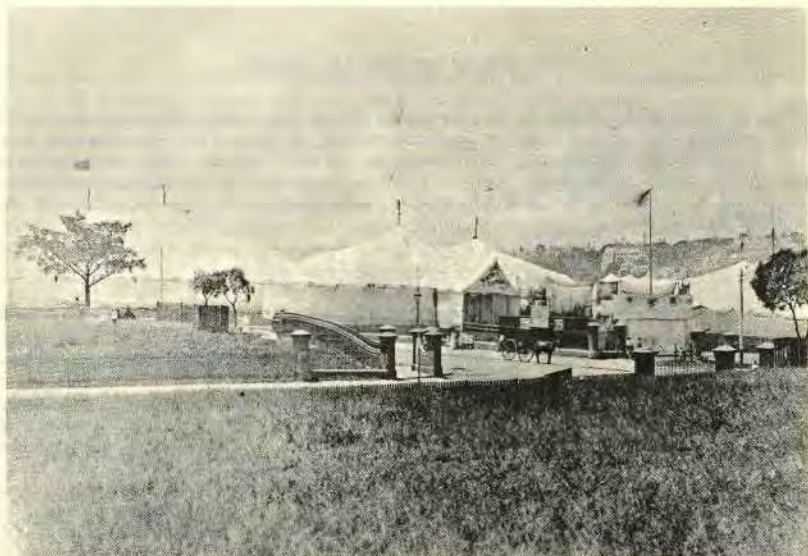
For his tenth year in the circus business, James A. Bailey leased the concert privileges on Hemmings, Cooper & Whitby. This was the beginning of a long business association with James E. Cooper which lasted, with but few interruptions, throughout Cooper's lifetime. In 1870, that show was also in its tenth year and had undergone several title changes and shifts in ownership since it was organized as Gardner & Hemmings in 1861. In 1871, Cooper, recognizing the worth of young Bailey's most promising forte, engaged him as General Agent at the unprecedented weekly salary of \$70.00 plus expenses. The owners and title were now cut down to Hemmings & Cooper after Harry Whitby was murdered while attending front door during the latter part of the previous season. Circus managers seemed to have been fair game in those days, because there was an epidemic of such unfortunate affairs--William Lake (Bailey's previous employer) in 1869, followed by Whitby and C. T. Ames in 1870.

For the year 1872, Bailey and George Middleton bought the concert, side-show, and concession privileges on Hemmings & Cooper for \$2,000 in advance, plus \$625 per week for the first twenty weeks and \$425 per week for the remainder of the season. Under the provisions of the contract, the circus was to provide the band for the concert and to furnish transportation for the concessionaires' employees; but Bailey, in return, was to lend his talents as a consultant on routing, advertising, and promotion.

In March of 1873, Cooper, who on that date owned three-quarters of the show then titled "James E. Cooper's International Circus," sold a quarter to Bailey for \$13,000. Richard Hemmings was out of it by this time, and the other quarter was held by Robert Hood. In setting up Bailey as a partner, Cooper granted him the very favorable terms of \$1,000 down with the balance to be paid out of the 1873 profits. However, if the profits were not sufficient to make the payments, Bailey was to be allowed up to three years to finish paying. Until the show went on rails in 1876, it confined its territory largely to the southern states, being particularly partial to Kentucky where, for three consecutive years, it opened its season at the Exposition Building in Louisville. In February, 1875, they acquired at the sale held in Lebanon, Ohio, of the defunct Great Eastern Circus, several animals for their menagerie and, in all probability, the Calliope which later so distressed the Australians.*

From 1876 through 1878 the show really lived up to its "Great International" title, because it wandered over most of the seven seas for three years. After terminating a transcontinental tour, which began in St. Louis in April 1876, in San Francisco, it sailed for Australia, arriving there in time to open in Sidney just before Christmas. Since overland transportation facilities were limited,

* Richard E. Conover, "The Calliope, Its Origin and Appreciation," C.H.S. Bandwagon, (February 1954), p. 4.



Cooper & Bailey, Sidney, Australia, December 1876

the Australian tour was made by shipping between the principal cities by boat and contracting with the local railroads for short inland tours. Sidney was re-visited twice, once in April 1877 after a southern excursion to Melbourne, Adelaide, and Tasmania, and again in November after spending the summer in northern Australian towns and on the island of Java in the Dutch East Indies. The third Sidney date was followed by a return to both Melbourne and Adelaide before proceeding to New Zealand in March of 1878. On the conclusion of the New Zealand engagement, the company spent fifty-eight long days on the high seas en-route to Callao, Peru, aboard the ship "Golden Sea" which had been chartered for the trip at a cost of \$7,500. The remainder of the year was spent in showing in the major coastal cities of South America from Lima to Rio by way of the Horn.

It was a well-worn "rag bag" that made it back to New York in December 1878. The storms at sea had taken a high toll of the most valuable animals, and the losses in South America had taken a cut out of the Australian profits. Such as there was of it, Bailey now owned a half interest, having bought out Hood's share in August of 1877 for \$1,000 in cash and seven promissory notes of undisclosed amounts. However, there was evidently still enough cash left in the till to buy the Great London Show for \$23,000 and thus refurbish their equipment.

The Great London Show was organized in 1871 as Howes Great London, being financed by Seth B. Howes and originally managed by his twin nephews, Elbert and Egbert C. Howes. While it featured the most dazzling street parade in America, the show appears to have always been just one step ahead of the sheriff for most of its existence. The Howes seemed to have relinquished control to Henry Barnum and James Kelly (both formerly heavily interested with Hyatt Frost in the Van Amburgh Show) shortly after the show went on rails in 1875. In 1877 there was



Cooper & Bailey Parade Lineup. Equipment pictured substantially agrees with the Melbourne, Australia, newspaper account of the event. (1877)

considerable legal shenanigans brought about by attachments instituted by James Reilly, printer, for overdue paper accounts. On this occasion, Kelly managed to save his interests by rigging a phony auction to John Parks and Homer Davis. Henry Barnum continued to manage for the new organization until Reilly caught up with them again and succeeded in getting title to the property late in 1878. He then sold it to Cooper and Bailey.

When the Howes show was organized, a deal was made with George Sanger, British circus impresario, to use the "Sanger's Royal British Menagerie" as an appendage to the "Howes Great London" title. After Cooper and Bailey bought the show, the title combination most frequently displayed was "The Great London Circus and International Allied Shows, combined with Sanger's Royal British Menagerie." The Howes name never appears, even after part of this long title was combined with the Barnum name in 1881. Seth B. Howes must have had his name protected so that it could not be sold with the property, because Bailey would certainly have used it if he had acquired it. In fact, it was not officially used after the 1877 "auction," because Parks and Davis warned title-jumpers through a notice in the Clipper that they held the copyright to "The Great London Show" title.

In his younger days, Bailey was just as adept in fabricating flowery press releases as the next man. Scattered throughout the McCaddon Archives are several examples, in his own handwriting, of such liberal interpretations of the truth. The stock tale of how the baby elephant, born on the Cooper & Bailey show in 1880, was responsible for bringing Barnum and Bailey together may just as well have been written after the merger as to have been the cause of it.

THE GREATEST SHOW ON EARTH

In the fall of 1880, Bailey, together with James L. Hutchinson (former concessionaire on Howes Great London, and later on Cooper & Bailey), joined the growing list of managers who had chanced an association with P. T. Barnum, trusting that the drawing power of the Barnum name would outweigh the difficulties of dealing with the "Museum Man from Bridgeport." The term of the first partnership was from 1881 through 1885, a period to be remembered for the exploitation of Jumbo and the bitter rivalry with Forepaugh over the respective merits of a couple of white elephants. In 1886-87 Bailey, "for reasons of health," was not with it, his interests being held by W. W. Cole and James E. Cooper. The latter, in 1880, for a consideration of \$40,000, had disposed of his interest in the firm of Cooper & Bailey to Bailey and/or Hutchinson. In 1888, Bailey entered into a new agreement with Barnum whereby he became half owner in the firm of Barnum & Bailey. All of the foregoing has been common knowledge, and the archives at Princeton contribute very little additional information previous to Barnum's death in April 1891.

P. T. Barnum's heirs consisted of his second wife, Nancy Fish Barnum, two surviving of three daughters by his first wife, Charity, and numerous grandchildren. It took Bailey four long and anxious years to win an undisputed control of the Greatest on Earth from this family. Fortunately for Bailey, they readily relinquished their interest in the Forepaugh Show which Barnum, Bailey, and Cooper had bought the previous year.

After completing the Barnum & Bailey Show's 1891 season, in accordance with one of the articles of the partnership, which provided for the equal sharing of the profits for any season that had commenced previous to the death of either partner, Bailey extended the agreement for two more years. Since this left the Barnum Estate in a position where it was collecting half of the profits without sharing in the problems of management, Bailey served notice in the Spring of 1893 that he intended to terminate the partnership and to sell the property at auction if he could not make a satisfactory deal for their interest. In late June he declined an offer to buy at a \$150,000 figure, and intimated that he would follow through on his announced plan, and henceforth devote his efforts to the operation of the Forepaugh Show. Apparently, the Forepaugh title did not hold the public esteem that it once enjoyed when it was run by Adam Forepaugh, Sr., because, sensing that the Barnum heirs were not falling for his bluff, Bailey retracted his threat a month later and offered to continue the partnership for 1894. By this twist in events, the big title of today may have narrowly missed being Ringling Brothers and Forepaugh Combined Shows.

Because of the economic conditions, the show did not show any profit in 1893. On November 3, Bailey met with one of the heirs at the Hotel Brunswick in New York; and a notation made on a piece of that hotel's stationery indicates that he offered \$75,000 for the estate's share of the property, title, and goodwill. Nothing was finalized at this conference, because, with the partnership agreement now extended for the ensuing year, one of the heirs blocked the sale. The negotiations were completed the following September when the estate accepted Bailey's personal note for \$35,000 and his half interest in the Bridgeport Winterquarters real estate for the circus chattels and the Barnum title. Mr. Bailey agreed to lease the quarters for five years, with renewal privileges for an additional ten years for an annual rent of \$4,000. In 1904, the renewal privileges were extended through 1924 at the same rate, and it was by this lease that the Ringlings continued to occupy the property after they acquired the show in 1907.

While this \$75,000 valuation may seem ridiculously low, it is only so when compared to previous concepts which were largely based on the false information

that had been released to the trade journals. Considering such factors as no profit in 1893, very little in 1894, the Barnum heirs squabbling among themselves, the pittance which show property usually brings at public auctions, the trump which the buyer held by already owning the Forepaugh Show, together with the probable fact that the Barnum name in itself had depreciated and was not worth much unless combined with Bailey, the terms of the sale are not surprising.

Those who nowadays are liberal in their criticism of John Ringling North for turning the circus into a parade of pageantry and pulchritude should have had a gander at the goings-on around the Bailey enterprises in the early part of the 1890 decade, for that was the era of the Kiralfy Brothers, producers of spectaculars extraordinary. The "Nero" production, first introduced in the 1889 London winter season, ran in the States for two touring seasons. One hundred fifty ballet girls and scenic sets that occupied what would normally be the entire short-side seating area were used to produce an extravaganza that would probably dwarf anything that has since been offered by a mobile organization. In 1892-93 the props, wardrobe, and theme were changed to "Columbus Discovers America." Concurrently in 1892, on the Forepaugh Show, the cry "bring on the dancing girls" was certainly heard during the presentation of the super-spectacle "The Fall of Nineveh." After these shows almost went through the wringer in the Panic of 1893, the elaborate pageants were discontinued; and nothing comparable was offered until the idea was revived for the 1902 Paris winter season.

By 1895, the Ringlings had become important, and it is highly possible that the competition from them may have had considerably to do with Bailey's decision to take his show to Europe. The profits for 1895 were only half those of 1894; and while no accounts seem to exist for 1896-97, the steps taken to raise funds for the European trip indicate that these years had not lined Bailey's coffers. Fortunately, he weathered the storm, including the uncalculated-for \$50,000 expense levied on him to provide a fireproof curtain in the Olympia before he was allowed to open. That winter season and the subsequent provincial tour of Great Britain in 1898 turned out to be the most successful in the show's history.

THE RISE AND FALL OF BARNUM & BAILEY, LTD.

Mr. Bailey took advantage of the extraordinary successful 1898 season to promote a stock company. As subsequent events turned out, this was the master financial move of his career, because the profit which the show made through 1907 when it was sold to the Ringlings was much less than he received from the sale of the stock. In April 1899 Barnum & Bailey, Ltd., was organized with a capital of £400,000. The stock issue consisted of 400,000 shares at a par value of £1/0/0, but only 266,667 shares were offered on the market at a 25 percent premium. Mr. Bailey retained the remainder except for 20,000 shares which he issued in equal amounts to Associate Directors Joseph T. McCaddon and George Starr and a few scattered shares which he gave to some of his employees. A few days after the initial offering, Bailey publicly announced that no dividend would be paid on the shares held by McCaddon, Starr, and himself, unless the dividend for any one year amounted to 20 percent on the rest of the shares. This produced the desired stimulant with the result that there were over 7,000 subscribers for the 266,667 shares, and the market value rose to a peak of £1/11/3 or approximately 56 percent above par. To accuse Mr. Bailey of engineering a shady stock promotion would be contrary to tradition and not compatible with his later refusals to accept all that was due him, but it is hard to explain how he could have been fired with so much optimism as to expect to be able to pay 20 percent dividends. Anyway, he arranged, in a measure, for his own income by having a salary of \$20,000 a year voted to him as Managing Director.

Depending upon the relative amounts of stock disposed of at prices between the opening quotation of 25 shillings and the top market value of 31 1/4 shillings, the total at the prevalent rate of exchange amounted to between \$1,700,000 and \$2,000,000. Of this, Bailey agreed to set aside the sum of \$250,000 for operating capital. The remainder still stands as the record value ever received for a proportionate interest in a circus title and property. For this sum, the company acquired the rights to use the Barnum & Bailey title in Europe, the lease Bailey held on the Stoke-on-Trent winterquarters, and the show property then in England. Bailey's state-side interest in the Forepaugh-Sells and the Buffalo Bill shows were not involved in the transaction. He also retained the privilege of reviving the Barnum & Bailey title in North America whenever he chose to do so.

Study of the records reveals that it took two-thirds of the 1899 profit to pay a 10 percent dividend of the par value on the "preferred" shares. In 1900 Bailey took an 80 percent salary reduction in order to pay another 10 percent. At the end of the 1901 season a similar dividend was paid, but at that time it was decided to "turn it around" and to open the 1903 season in the States. The years 1902 and 1903 also paid a 10 percent dividend, but it was reduced to 6 percent in 1904. This was increased to 7 1/2 percent in 1905 and reduced to zero percent in 1906. These dividends were not always in line with the profits, and it is apparent that they were sometimes paid out of the working capital.

In October, 1907, at a special meeting, the stockholders were advised to accept an offer to sell the show, title, winterquarters and cars, etc., still in Europe, and the property and contract with the Buffalo Bill Show then back in America to a Mr. A. A. Stewart for the sum of \$400,000. It was not disclosed at this meeting that Mr. Stewart, whose full-time occupation was selling for the Strowbridge Lithographing Company but who had on other occasions performed similar services for Mr. Bailey, was acting as an intermediary for the Ringling Brothers. At a later meeting, when one of the stockholders was objecting to the payment of a fee to Stewart for services rendered, the directors weakly defended their policy of dealing indirectly by stating that they could not afford to give the Ringlings an opportunity to generate any publicity that the show was about to fail, and thus affect the receipts for the remainder of the 1907 season. As often happens in corporate affairs, the assembled stockholders were powerless as the Bailey Estate, McCaddon, Stewart, and other closely related associates together controlled 51 percent of the stock. Also, since the company only leased the Barnum & Bailey title for its American operation, the state-side rights to this title would not be conveyed in this transaction. Therefore, the purchase of the title rights must have been the subject of a supplementary agreement between the Ringlings and the Bailey Estate.

After the sale was approved and completed, liquidation proceedings, which eventually yielded a total dividend of 11/2d per share, were completed in April, 1909. This sum, plus the total of all previous dividends, adds up to just a little over 23 shillings. Thus, the net loss on a ten-year investment was two shillings per share, a result which is not at all unique when angels flutter around in show business.

The principal reason for the company's not showing a profit was that it was over-capitalized as a result of Bailey's being paid too much money for the property and goodwill. The sale price was justified on the basis of the exceptionally good 1898 winter season in Olympia and the subsequent road season when the show was a novelty to the British. The profit for that year was \$570,000. In contrast, the average profit for the eight years following 1888 was only \$123,000 per year. There are no records for 1896 and 1897, but it can be assumed that they were not too satisfactory; otherwise, why would Bailey have sold one-half of

his interest in the Buffalo Bill agreement and one-half of his holdings in the Forepaugh-Sells Show to W. W. Cole for a paltry \$50,000 unless he was short of finances for his European venture? Analysis of the terms of this transaction indicates that it was a personal favor on Cole's part, rather than any desire of his own to come out of retirement. There are some other notes which indicate that Bailey also had bank loans totaling \$130,000 on the eve of his departure for England.

Even with this over-capitalization, it is possible that the stockholders would eventually have come out ahead if Bailey had lived. In reviewing the nine years of operation, one must conclude that, while a few instances of bad judgment are apparent in retrospect, the overall fortunes do not appear to have been any worse than usually experienced in this business.

The best chronicle that we have on the European tour is Harvey Watkins' book "Four Years in Europe with Barnum & Bailey." Like all route books, it cannot be permitted to reflect anything derogatory; but from it we can gather that there was an unusual number of performances lost because of weather, lot conditions, and light-plant equipment failures. Also, the forced lay-off decreed by the German Government on the occasion of the death of Empress Frederica, Mother of William II, accounted for the loss of an entire week.

However, this publication and other written and oral testimony by members of the troupe indicate that the show did nothing but business. These parties naturally had only the size of the crowds on which to base their opinions and had no idea of the operating costs. From several entries made in the records, it appears that the regulations and shakedowns imposed by European bureaucracy threw the calculations for the show to make a killing out of gear. Nevertheless, the profits were reasonable but not enough to pay the three principal stockholders any dividends under the terms that the stock was sold.

The rental and renovation expenses for the two buildings used for the continental winter dates must have mounted to an appreciable figure. In Vienna, for the 1900 winter season, the Rotunde, which had never housed a successful commercial venture, had to be equipped with a heating plant and a deal made with the local transportation company to extend the car lines. In Paris, the Galerie des Machines, erected for the Exposition of 1900 and used for the show's 1901-1902 winter season, was acquired for a rental fee of \$23,000. This building also required the installation of a heating plant for the three and one-half month occupancy.

New wardrobe and floats for apparently the most elaborate production number since the "Nero" and "Columbus" spectacles of the early nineties were obtained to stage the spectacle "King Solomon and the Queen of Sheba." The accommodations at the Galerie des Machines were both ideal and unique. This building was a 1,400-foot long affair, located on the Champ de Mars immediately behind the Eiffel Tower. The structure was so immense that it completely contained an inner building that, in itself, was of adequate size to present a three-ring performance, and still had ample room left over in the outer building to house the menagerie and "back yard" under the same roof. In fact, it was in this area that Jake Posey rehearsed the Forty Horse Hitch, which had not paraded since October 8, 1900, in preparation for the traditional Mid-Lent Parade held that year on the 6th of March.

For the triumphal re-entry to the United States, the company splurged with new parade equipment, two new light plants, and new seats, all of which had been previously ordered from American suppliers. They also embarked with \$14,000 worth of new French wardrobe, five new elephants, and other minor animals purchased



Spec lineup in Backyard, "Galerie des Machines"
Paris, 1902, showing exterior Salle des Fetes

from Hagenbeck. In addition, they paid Bailey and Cole \$60,000 for the cars and other surplus property that was available because of the simultaneous transfer of the Buffalo Bill Show to Europe.

Since Bailey had not been faring so well in the matter of dividends, he arranged a supplemental agreement whereby he received 10 percent of the profits as a royalty for his American title rights. As the profits turned out to be even less during the American tour, he, during his lifetime, never collected these royalties. However, Mrs. Bailey pressed for collection and was paid all back royalties before the liquidation was completed.

Since one of my principal incentives to do research on the circus seems to be to trace the history of parade wagons, I was rather disappointed with the meager amount of documentary information other than photographs that McCaddon had acquired or retained on that subject. It was particularly regrettable that there were no records of the deals with the Sebastian Wagon Company for the 1903 parade equipment, other than two entries in the Minutes of the Directors' Meetings concerning this transaction. On January 4, 1902, a notation was made that Sebastian had a contract for four tableau cars (by inference, these would be the four Continental Wagons--Asia, America, Africa, and Europe), six racing chariots, and eight additional tableau cars. These eight would be Funny Folks, Fairy Tales, Golden Age of Chivalry, Egypt, Our Country, Phoenician Galley, Siam (sometimes referred to as the Queen's Float), and Balkis, or the King's Float. The Phoenician Galley was similar to one of the four temporary floats built especially for the Paris "King Solomon" production, and the Balkis bore some resemblance to another one. On the 17th of June, it was noted that the Sebastian contract changed



Interior Salle des Fetes, Paris, 1902

to include a new bandwagon--this would be the Twin Hemispheres. Thus, thirteen elaborate and expensive parade pieces with negligible utility value were acquired. (NOTE: On page 13 of my previous publication, "The Telescoping Tableaus," March, 1956, this number was erroneously given as nine.)

While all of this was intended to woo the public away from the Ringling Show, and it must have made a grand impression, it was soon found out that the added burden of putting out this daily pageant, when coupled with other factors, made the show too heavy to move. The inevitable strain on overworked employees pyramided into labor trouble, late arrivals, blown dates, and an unsuccessful season. After two years of attempting to cope with the situation, the parade was abandoned in 1905. That year, although perhaps only by coincidence, was the only really satisfactory year in America during the life of the company. Mr. Bailey died the next Spring, and from then on the business deteriorated rapidly.

PERPETUATING FOREFAUGH

In the fall of 1889, Adam Forepaugh, who over a period of twenty years had built up what in all probability was the finest circus aggregation in the country, realized that his health was failing. Accordingly, we find news items in the early December issues of the New York Clipper to the effect that he was negotiating with some British interests to form a stock company to take over the operation of his show. These rumors persisted even after Forepaugh's death on January 27 of the following year, with figures as high as \$600,000 for a three-quarter interest being quoted as having been agreed upon. If there were any such negotiations transpiring in England, they may have been with Messrs. Bailey and Barnum who

were currently in London where the Barnum & Bailey Show was making its winter season at the Olympia. In any event, that deal folded; and Bailey, with Barnum somewhat in the role of an unwilling partner, sent James E. Cooper as a front to negotiate with the Forepaugh Estate.

Cooper bought the show from Mrs. Mary G. Forepaugh on February 25 for \$160,000. He paid one-quarter down, agreeing to pay another quarter on April 1 and the remaining half in eight payments covering a period of two years. He also agreed to perpetuate the name of Adam Forepaugh and to give Adam Forepaugh, Jr., a chance to buy it back if Cooper wished to dispose of it at some future date. Adam, Jr., was also contracted for a side payment of \$10,000 to appear with the show and to work his trained stallions and bronchos during the 1890 tour. This high salary was probably justifiable on the basis of having young Forepaugh around to reassure the public that the attraction had not suffered by the change in management. In line with this policy, the new owners even rebuilt the Cleopatra Barge, the show's most familiar parade float that had been destroyed in a railroad wreck the previous summer.

It is not clear what pressure was brought to bear to execute the next step, because we find that on March 6, 1890, an appendix was added to the original sale contract whereby Cooper was granted the privilege to dispose of a part interest to James A. Bailey. In another contract dated the same day between Cooper, Bailey, and Barnum, which divided the property three ways, it develops that all of the \$80,000 down payment had been advanced by Messrs. Barnum and Bailey. This contract provided for means of continuing the operation or disposing of the property in the event of the death of any of the partners, but it placed a ceiling of \$200,000 on its total value in case there would be any transfer of interests between the partners.

Mr. Bailey induced McCaddon, who was in partnership with Middleton and Kohl in the operation of a museum at Minneapolis, to close out his interests there and to join the show as his representative. Until forced by events which developed two years later, Bailey never publicly admitted any connection with the operation. Whether the grapevine of the day made the fact of his association common knowledge is not known, but no printed word that would have reached the public has been found which admits otherwise than that Cooper was the sole owner. Notwithstanding his official status as just a mere employee, Forepaugh, Jr., seemed to carry considerable weight around the show, as, for example, Jake Posey's story about how Adam, Jr., kept him from getting fired for working McCaddon over after a heated argument developed from a somewhat trivial incident. Of course, this occurred during the time that the new owners still owed money to the Forepaugh family; because about the time that the debt was due to be settled, Junior was dispensed with entirely.

For the years 1890-1893 this show was on about fifty cars, just ten less than the Barnum & Bailey Show. With these two giants, Bailey had the opposition well under control. The next two largest shows were the John Robinson on forty cars and the Sells Brothers on thirty-five. Then followed the Ringlings, Walter L. Main, and Wallace on twenty to twenty-five cars each, although the Ringlings were coming up rapidly. Even so, in a letter written in mid-season 1891 by Bailey to McCaddon after Barnum was dead and Cooper was seriously considering selling out, the communication being pitched to ascertain McCaddon's attitude on accepting a more responsible participation, Bailey was complaining that the show was not grossing what it should, that it was interfering with the routing of the Barnum & Bailey Show, and that the Forepaugh Show should be cut to forty cars.

Later in the season Cooper must have changed his mind about withdrawing completely, because in October, 1891, he and Bailey bought out the Barnum Estate's interest for a proportionate share of the original purchase price. This hardly had been accomplished before Cooper died on the following New Year's Day. Shortly thereafter, Bailey bought out Mrs. Catherine Cooper's holdings for \$80,000 and transferred a quarter-share to McCaddon for \$40,000 on a nothing-down, pay-as-it-earns basis. It never earned because the Panic of 1892-93 was imminent. Due to the times, which saw the eclipse of both the Robinson and the Sells Shows until reprimed with outside capital, it is very likely that Bailey's purchase of the Forepaugh Show turned out to be a mistake, except that it later put him into a more favorable position to bargain with the Barnum heirs for their interest in Barnum & Bailey.

At the end of 1893, Bailey repossessed McCaddon's interest but leased the title and enough equipment for a twenty-one-car, one-ring show to McCaddon and Anderson for the season of 1894--a great title on a small affair which the public could not fathom. In 1895, the title was dormant while part of the equipment was used to mobilize the Buffalo Bill Show.

THE MOBILIZATION OF THE WILD WEST

In 1893, Nate Salsbury, the guiding genius of the firm of Cody and Salsbury, owners and promoters of the Buffalo Bill Wild West Show, began to search for a new formula which would tap that portion of the populace that had been inaccessible under the mode of operation used for the first decade of the show's existence. During this era, after experimenting in a hit-and-miss fashion for the first two years, it was found that the show paid best when it played long engagements in such places as Staten Island, London, and other European locations.

While the Bill Show was enjoying the most successful season in its history, being set up adjacent to the Columbian Exposition in Chicago, it was obvious to Salsbury that it was running out of places to go. Perhaps this phenomenal local success was partly attributable to the tip it got from the overflow of the crowds clamoring to get in to see "Little Egypt," or it can even be suspected that it served as a convenient place for dad to park the family while he went to witness that stellar attraction. However, it is fairly well established that the entire Chicago operation was a bust until the fame of the pseudo-Egyptian spread far and wide. After that, it was lucky just to be in the vicinity.

In any event, it is recorded that when the Forepaugh Show played Chicago, Salsbury contacted McCaddon, who was in charge of that organization for Bailey, and broached the idea which eventually brought Mr. Bailey into the affairs of the Wild West. After both parties had another season of dismal operations, Bailey and McCaddon with the Forepaugh Show, and the Wild West in a return engagement in the New York area, the proposition really looked good at the end of 1894.

Accordingly, a unique contractual arrangement was entered into whereby it was distinctly disavowed that a partnership existed and, thus, neither party was responsible for the obligations of the other; but both parties would split the "take" equally while each assumed certain well-defined items of the expense. In essence, Cody and Salsbury supplied everything pertaining to the performance, including the performers' salaries, the livestock and props necessary to put on the show, the lighting equipment, all paper (lithographs, couriers, programs, and tickets), and paid for the feed and groceries for the entire company. Mr. Bailey furnished the cars, the baggage wagons, baggage stock, tents, seats, and paid the salaries of the personnel who were concerned with advertising and moving the show.

He also assumed the cost of the lots, licenses, and the railroad transportation. The concession profits were also split, except for the souvenir book on the "Life of Buffalo Bill" which Bailey did not share.

It was further spelled out that William F. Cody was to devote his entire time to the business and was to appear "in the saddle" at every performance unless dire circumstances prevented it. Neither Salsbury nor Bailey was expected to devote his entire time, but Bailey was allowed to have adequate representation to insure an honest "first count" in the receipts. For the first three years J. T. McCaddon headed up Mr. Bailey's representation. The original agreement was for one year, but it was renewed periodically with but minor changes through the 1902 season. In all, it seemed to have been a satisfactory arrangement and a paying proposition. At the end of the 1897 season, Mr. Bailey sold half of his interest to W. W. Cole, a once-retired circus impresario, who, by this act, was destined to become active for another ten years. Coincidentally, McCaddon went to Europe with the Barnum & Bailey Show, and, according to his own admission, was thankful to be shed of the responsibility of dealing with Cody.

After the decision was made late in 1901 to open the 1903 season of the Barnum & Bailey Show in America, negotiations were started with Cody and Salsbury to transfer their operations to Europe. By this move the rolling stock, winterquarters, and other physical European assets of Barnum & Bailey, Ltd., would be utilized. Apparently, the operators of the Wild West were not too enthusiastic about the deal; because we find that as late as July, 1902, George Starr, Associate Director of Barnum & Bailey, Ltd., was sent home from Europe, with Bailey following, to do a bit of convincing, as Salsbury and Cody were angling to back out of the agreement signed the previous January. This agreement, to cover a period of two years, was essentially the same as the previous arrangements, except that the firm of Barnum & Bailey, Ltd., replaced Mr. Bailey personally. Also, it appears that Cody wrangled for and was allowed a little more voice in the day-to-day operations.

Starr's trip must have succeeded in placating the doubts and differences, because the Wild West cut short its American tour in order to be able to open in the Olympia, London, the day after Christmas. The opening was almost coincidental with the death of Nate Salsbury, who, after being in ill health for a number of years, passed away on Christmas Eve.

Then began the debacle. Although Fred B. Hutchinson, the company's manager on the show ably held up their end, Cody, whose business acumen could be depended upon to suffer relapses when confronted with gold-mine promotions, women, or liquor, had no Salsbury to manage him. Consequently, we find that as early as March, 1903, the company loaned him \$15,000 on a personal note. The show blundered along and closed the 1903 season with but little profit to the company. The indications are that Cody was broke, because it was at this time that the partnership of Cody & Bailey was formed. Mr. Bailey's motives for this action are not clear, unless it was because he felt some obligation toward his company to utilize the European plant. He may also have thought that it could be organized to show a profit. It never did as long as it stayed abroad. It may have been that the appeal of the attraction was gone after two previous foreign trips in 1887 and 1889 through 1891, or perhaps the nut was too great under the short-stand mode of operation. There was one major disaster that cost the show its bronchos when they were hit with a glanders epidemic while touring France in 1905.

In the bailout agreement which Bailey tendered to Cody in December, 1903, the former acquired a one-half interest in both the property and the Buffalo Bill Wild West title for \$100,000. The partnership was to continue through 1913; also, Cody was bound to appear as the feature of the performance through 1908. Of the pur-

chase price, \$60,000 was paid immediately, obviously for the purpose of either paying off Mrs. Rachel Salsbury for her interest in the old partnership or settling the debts with Barnum & Bailey, Ltd.; the remaining \$40,000 was withheld to be divided into two equal payments, the first due at the end of the 1904 season and the other, a year later, provided Cody had been able to fulfill his obligation as the feature attraction.

After the 1904 tour resulted in further deficits, which Bailey was obliged to finance, Cody was forced to acquiesce to a two-year extension (through 1910) of the term in the original contract that required him to serve as the feature. In addition, he acknowledged responsibility and agreed to eventually pay for his share of the losses. Since the contract with Barnum & Bailey, Ltd., terminated at the end of the 1904 season, and since the company's profits on this venture had not been satisfactory, Bailey got Cody to agree to continue the European tour for 1905 and 1906 on a basis whereby Cody & Bailey paid a flat rental fee for the use of the Barnum & Bailey, Ltd., property. While the 1906 tour, the first after Bailey's death, resulted in a little profit, the show was returned to America with Cody in debt to the Bailey Estate in the amount of \$153,000. While Cody claimed that Bailey had agreed to forgive all net losses if he would continue the European tour, such documentation as is available for examination gave the executors of the estate ample excuse to seek redress. This they proceeded to do.

At this point, mention should be made that the cars, baggage stock, baggage wagons, and perhaps the canvas used by the show were still the property of Barnum & Bailey, Ltd., and, subsequently, passed to the Ringlings when the latter bought the physical assets of the company in July, 1907.

Since Cody was without means to pay his debt to the Bailey Estate, or to Mrs. Ruth Louisa Bailey in particular, a new contract was entered into on December 6, 1906, whereby he agreed to stay with the show as its "star" through the 1910 season and to assign his share of the profits to the estate, except for an allowance of up to \$500 per week on a week-to-week basis if the show made it, until the debt was liquidated. Mrs. Bailey retained the privilege of selling out the show for the best terms obtainable if the profits were not satisfactory and of dividing the first proceeds between herself and the indebtedness, or of disposing of her interest within the terms of the contract at any time.

Apparently, the 1907 profits were satisfactory, because a record exists that the Cody notes were paid down to \$65,000 at the beginning of the 1908 season. At this point Gordon W. Lillie (Pawnee Bill) enters the picture, and we again find Mr. A. A. Stewart serving as an intermediary. From a letter written to McCaddon by Stewart, dated August 19, 1908, and from a subsequent contract between Louisa Bailey and Lillie, dated August 26, it can be determined that Lillie paid Mrs. Bailey \$33,333.33 for a one-third interest in the show and was granted an option to purchase the remainder of her interest (one-sixth of total) for half that amount if exercised within a year. Cody was also prevailed upon to transfer one-third of his interest to Mrs. Bailey at the same rate, payable in canceled notes. On that August 19 date, there appears to have been an accumulated surplus of \$62,000, mostly 1908 profits. Of this amount, \$30,000 was used to buy the Ringling property, as they were desirous of withdrawing from the rental arrangement. Lillie also paid an additional \$10,000 for his share of this fund. Another \$30,000 was divided between Mrs. Bailey and Cody, the latter receiving his in the form of canceled notes. Cody apparently protested relinquishing a third of his interest but agreed to do so after being granted some concessions whereby he received some additional cash instead of credit on his indebtedness at the end of the season. All of these transactions resulted in Cody, Lillie, and Mrs. Bailey each owning one-third of the show, including the former Barnum & Bailey, Ltd.,

(later Ringling) physical equipment, and the combined Buffalo Bill Wild West-Pawnee Bill Far East title.

On May 26, 1909, Lillie paid Mrs. Bailey \$68,126.53 for her remaining one-third interest, \$27,000 worth of Cody notes still unpaid, and such profits as had accumulated during the early part of the season. Thus, Lillie ended up with two-thirds of the show, a two-year lease "in the saddle," and a \$27,000 club on Cody. The terms of the original partnership calling for its continuance through 1913 were also part of the contract sold to Lillie. This leads one to speculate whether or not Cody violated a breach of faith as is usually interpreted when he signed up with Tannen and Bonifils to go with Sells-Floto in 1914--or had he just been released from bondage?

There are indications that in his last desperate years, Cody hoped to recover some of the money that the Bailey Estate extracted from him when, in December, 1913, he testified in favor of the Hutchinsons in a suit to set aside Mrs. Bailey's will. Mrs. Bailey had left the bulk of her estate to her brothers, Theodore and Joseph McCaddon, and practically cut out her sister, Mrs. Anna Hutchinson, together with her sons, Fred B. and Charles R. Hutchinson. It seems that the Hutchinson boys dropped from favor after Mr. Bailey died, and especially so since they opposed their aunt in reinstating McCaddon to a responsible position in the company. (McCaddon resigned as an Associate Director of Barnum & Bailey, Ltd., in January, 1904. See paragraph 3, page 15.) The will was contested on the claim that the Hutchinsons had been more instrumental in building up the Bailey fortune than had Joseph T. McCaddon, and they were therefore entitled to an equitable share of the estate. After several court actions, the Hutchinsons lost the suit.

THE FOREPAUGH-SELLS COMBINE

After the Forepaugh Show closed in 1894, the title was dormant for a year before it was revived and appended to the Sells Brothers Circus to bolster the prestige that show once enjoyed before its unsuccessful war with the Ringling Show and the general economic conditions in 1894-95. For the Forepaugh title, and undoubtedly some financial assistance, Bailey acquired a one-third interest in the Forepaugh-Sells Circus, his partners being Ephraim, Lewis, and Peter Sells, three of the four brothers who started the show in 1872. The combined show went out on fifty cars, and the parade was augmented with some Bailey property, including the old Forepaugh Cleopatra Barge Float and the two former telescoping tableaux originally from the 1871 Howes Great London Circus, now remodeled to serve as the principal bandwagons.

In October, 1897, Bailey, who was apparently in need of funds to finance the transfer of the Barnum & Bailey Show to Europe, sold one-half of his interest to William W. Cole. After Ephraim Sells died in 1898, his share was somehow juggled so that Bailey, Cole, and the two surviving Sells' each held a quarter of the show.

It appears that, in spite of the magic Forepaugh name, the show was still taking a beating from its major opposition, the Ringlings, because we find that late in 1899 a deal was pending between the Sells brothers, Cole, and Bailey to revive the use of the Barnum & Bailey title. Although that show was then in Europe, Mr. Bailey had retained the American rights to the title when he promoted the stock company in Great Britain. Judging from the terms of the incipient agreement, the situation around Forepaugh-Sells must not have been particularly healthy; because we find that Cole and the Sells brothers were about to go along with a proposition whereby they would each surrender their quarter-shares in the Forepaugh-Sells

property and collectively put up the first \$100,000 required for refitting, in return for only a one-sixth interest each in the new show. Mr. Bailey was to contribute the sixty railroad cars then in Bridgeport and the title rights in return for the remaining one-half interest. In addition, the new concern was to assume the lease that Bailey held from the Barnum heirs for the Bridgeport winter-quarters.

After the first preliminary conversations, Bailey returned to London and left the continuance of the negotiations to his friend, Albert A. Stewart. After parleying for about a month, Cole and the Sells brothers cooled off, with Peter Sells in particular putting a quietus to the deal because of his health and personal troubles. He was at this time the defendant in a divorce suit which the Columbus papers were playing up with a sensationalism that rivaled the best publicity that the Sells Show had ever been able to conjure. So the show continued on in the established status until Peter died in October, 1904, and it became necessary to take action to settle his estate.

Even before this, Bailey must have foreseen that he would have to take over the entire operation; because, in a telegram to McCaddon, dated September 11, 1904, Bailey revealed his intentions to buy it and propositioned McCaddon to come back into the fold as manager. The deal which was eventually made to out the Ringlings in for a half-interest must have also been under discussion at that time, because, in this telegram, Bailey stated that he did not want to do business with the Ringlings; and, in order to avoid this alternative, he offered McCaddon a quarter-interest at no cost and \$100 a week in salary.

His preferred alternative must have had a slightly unsavory taste, because McCaddon and Bailey had recently severed relations. It seems that McCaddon, motivated by jealousy towards some of the lesser lights in Bailey's entourage, coupled with the fact that his major remuneration was expected to come from the dividends on his 10,000 shares of company stock which had never paid anything, plus some feedback which led him to sense that Bailey was dissatisfied with him as an assistant, had resigned his directorship in Barnum & Bailey, Ltd., the previous January. During the months immediately following, some incidents had occurred which caused him to suspect that some of his late rivals, or even Bailey himself, had been influential in preventing him from making some advantageous connections. In a long 3,500-word letter dispatched to Bailey from Paris in August, 1904, which was both akin to the yelps of a whipped dog and a combination of censure, apology, and conciliation, he really poured his heart out on how he had served Bailey faithfully almost continually since 1876 and had so little to show for it, either in worldly goods or appreciation.

As events turned out, he muffed his chance again, because he turned down the Forepaugh-Sells offer to follow through with the McCaddon International venture. It appears that, coincidentally with Bailey's proposition, he had committed himself to the group which shortly thereafter bought the Sig Sautelle Show and shipped it to France where it opened under the McCaddon title for a very short and disastrous season in 1905. There he lost his bankroll attempting to fight the Bailey-controlled Buffalo Bill Show. After his show folded, he fled to England, because he feared some civil or criminal action in the French courts. While the British were holding him against possible extradition, his wife died. Since he was practically destitute, Bailey, acting undercover through his agent, provided funds for the return of Mrs. McCaddon's remains to America and was prepared to assist in the defense against legal actions if necessary. No court action was ever taken and McCaddon was released, to be out of the orbit of Bailey's affairs until his sister reinstated him after her husband's death the following Spring.

Notwithstanding all of these secret negotiations to settle the status of the Forepaugh-Sells Show, the owners issued a 32-page catalog listing the property in

detail and announced that the show would be sold piecemeal at auction on January 10, 1905. The sale proved to be no more than a grand reunion for the big and little circus men who attended with hopeful expectations of picking up some bargains, as Bailey immediately bid in the whole works for \$150,000. He then followed through on the deal that had been rigged with the Ringlings. The final act in the manipulation of the property occurred on June 5, 1906, when the Ringlings bought Mrs. Bailey's interest for \$100,000, payable with \$10,000 in cash, and three \$30,000 notes, which were paid off, as agreed, on the first day of the three following months.

THE PARADE IN EUROPE

Three bandwagons, four tableau wagons, five pony floats, a large platform float listed in the February, 1899, inventory as the Ferdinand & Isabella, six racing chariots, a bell wagon, a Calliope, and twenty-five cages appeared in the European parades. Except for the four floats of a temporary type construction used in the Paris winter season, this inventory was never augmented during the entire time that the show was abroad.

Included in the bandwagons were the Five Graces, which Bailey acquired with the Forepaugh Show, and another of the shell-canopy type, that was an importation from England when the Howes Great London Show was framed in 1871. The pony floats were Cinderella, Mother Goose, Bluebeard, Red Riding Hood, all of which were built between 1883 and 1885, and the Three Headed Dragon, which also was on the 1871 Howes Great London Show. The show's three other pony floats (Sinbad, the Sailor; Santa Claus; and The Old Woman in the Shoe) were not shipped over on this trip, but all eight had been sent over for the 1889 winter season in Olympia, London.

Two of the four tableau wagons were ornamented with corner statues and large irregularly shaped mirrors. These were the ones which after 1910 appeared on Fred Buchanan's Yankee Robinson Circus. The other two tableaux were less elaborate; in fact, the parade equipment on the Barnum & Bailey Show was not nearly as impressive as that on the Forepaugh-Sells Show.

Of the twenty-five cages, ten were of the elaborately decorated corner-statue type, which had been on the show since the early 1880's. In 1892-93, nine of them had been fitted up with auxiliary side and roof decorations upon which rode members of the company appropriately costumed to round out a series of Arabian Night Tales and Nursery Rhyme motifs. In the same parade, the tenth cage and the four tableau wagons were fitted out in a similar way to depict five tableaux portraying events in American history. One of the highlights in the Princeton Collection are the original designs in watercolor for these wagon panels.

The parades were made both years in England; but, after experimenting for most of the 1900 season in Germany, it was decided that the parade was hurting the business. Apparently, the large crowds that turned out for the free display thought that they had seen it all and, consequently, did not show up at the "red wagon." Accordingly, that last parade was made at Frankfort on October 8. After closing that Fall, the bandwagons, tableau wagons, and the bell wagon were stored in Vienna during the 1901 tour. They were brought back to the show in Paris and carried throughout the 1902 season, but no parades were given.

* * * * *

Such are the highlights in the career of the man who has been eulogized as The World's Most Successful Showman. That he was successful is admitted. Any individual who could keep three big circuses on the road must be termed successful even if it frequently took the profits from one to keep another operating. However,

those who measure success on a purely monetary basis could claim that he was not a successful showman but a successful stock merchant. Analysis of the Princeton material definitely reveals that, before the promotion of the British stock company, ready cash was usually short and that the \$1,060,000 which Mrs. Bailey realized from the final and equitable liquidation of all her show property was just about equivalent to the profits which had accrued from that promotion.

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APPENDIX

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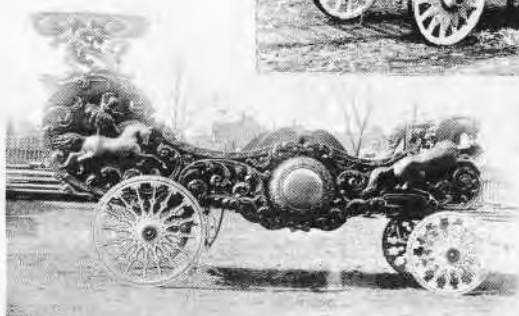
THE BARNUM & BAILEY SHOW ANTECEDENTS

- 1861-65 (Dan) Gardner & Hemmings. Cooper buys in about 1864.
 1866-67 (W. H.) Gardner, Hemmings & Co.
 1868-70 Hemmings, Cooper & Whitby.
 1871-72 Hemmings & Cooper.
 1873 James E. Cooper's International.
 1874-78 Cooper & Bailey's International Allied Shows.
 1879-80 The London Circus and International Allied Shows Combined.
 1881-87 P. T. Barnum's Greatest Show on Earth, The London Circus and International Allied Shows Combined.
 1888-1918 Barnum & Bailey.

CHRONOLOGY OF EVENTS IN JAMES A. BAILEY'S PERSONAL LIFE

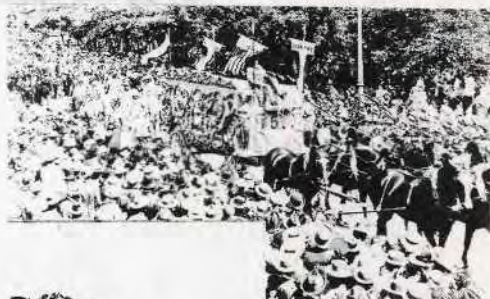
- 1847 Born July 4 at Detroit, Michigan, as James A. McGinnis.
 1849 Father died.
 1855 Mother died, sister's husband appointed as James A's guardian.
 1859 Left home to work as a bellboy in a Pontiac, Michigan, hotel.
 1861 Joined the advance on Robinson & Lake's Circus under their agent Mr. Frederick H. Bailey, whose surname James A. adopted.
 1863 Employed as a billposter on John and Alexander Robinson's Circus.
 1864 Assistant Agent and Head Billposter on William Lake's Circus.
 1865 Sutler to General Sherman's Army.
 1866-69 With Lake's Circus, eventually rising to the post of business manager. Show broke up shortly after Lake was murdered in August 1869.
 1868 Married Ruth Louisa McCaddon of Zanesville, Ohio.
 1870-1906 Period covered by this narrative.
 1906 Bailey dies in New York on April 11.
 1912 Mrs. Bailey dies in Florida on March 11.
 1938 Joseph T. McCaddon dies on January 21. At the time of his death he was said to have been working on a biography of Bailey. He should have finished it, as it would have been much better than this one.

FIVE GRACES
BANDWAGON
ORIGINALLY A
FOREPAUGH
TELESCOPER.



HOWES GREAT
LONDON 1871
BANDWAGON.

TABEAU IN
GERMANY
PARADE.



ELITE
CAGE
LINEUP.

EQUIPMENT USED IN EUROPEAN PARADES