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PRESENTS

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HIGH WIRE ACTS

(Continued from page 42)
 been the same with high-wire performers as in other lines of endeavor. Some are born with the gift for their different line of work, while others face into it with indifference. In other words, a fellow has to have "the stuff" or he is out of the picture.

Apparatus Facilities

Another point in the apparatus facilities as used by the present-day high-

Grand-Stand Shows

SMITH'S Superba Band has been booked for Tri-County Fair, Elm, Pa. reports Manager Hugh M. Smith.

JIMMIE LYNCH and his Death Dodgers have been booked as opening day attraction at three-day exhibition (Bask.) Exhibition, mid Fair Manager O. M. Cook.

PAUL WHITEMAN and his organization will feature musical attraction at the 1939 Wisconsin State Fair, Beaver Falls, playing afternoon and night in the grand stand and at the night Horse Show. Blow-off for the grand stand show is at 7:45 p.m. and Horse Show starts at 8 p.m. and Fair Manager Phil O. Travis stating that the free-act, provided closed early to give the midway a break. Whiteman contract was closed by Judge William Dickman, chairman, and James A. Cayce, of the fair board. It calls for the entire week, except for auto races on Saturday.

AMONG free attractions at Mason County Fair, Judge, Va., will be Korte and Mae Morris, trapeze. Lynn Clyde Pryor's band will furnish music.

O. A. KLEIN'S circus unit has been booked as a two-night grand-stand attraction for Jefferson County Fair, Sautsford, O.

MORALE TROUPE, teeterboard, who recently closed with Walter L. Main Circus, will play special events and celebration until fair closes at Sautsford, Va. by Williams & Lee start late in July.

KLEIN'S Attractions have been again contracted for the grand stand at Dayton, (Pa.) Fair. circus unit will be offered the first nights and musical revue the last two.

SI AND FANONIE Oles and trick mule, Abner, at George Jessell's Old New York at the New York World's Fair, report contract for fair in Newton, Colorado, Thompsonville, Benton, Albion, Peonetics and State Fair, Springfield, Elkhart, Monticello, Painesville and Loudonville, O., and Jackson, Adrian and Hastings, Mich., last two being repeats.

STARK County Fair, Canton, O., reports Fair Secretary E. J. Wilson, has booked the Circle A Race Rodos for afternoon and night performance before the grand stand at the 1939 four-day fair.

CHECK FRANKLIN, manager of Capt. Jerry Edwards' Cavalcade of Thrills, auto thrill show, reports that Utah State Fair, Salt Lake City, has contracted for 10 shows in eight days.

wire acts. During my long career I have never seen two apparatuses alike arranged in the same manner. Each and everyone of the acts had his own ideas and methods in erecting apparatus. Up to 10 or 15 years ago a high-wire act never thought of carrying two high poles for the erection of persipherals. Today that has all been changed. Since the introduction of the transport truck high-wire acts now have their own private trucks for transporting equipment, making it possible to carry their own two high poles in sections. This, I must say, is a big help to them in that they become used to performing at the same height, and the use of a shorter span of wire on wheels in performance between their own two poles is another reason for not seeing a class of high-wire performances different from those in years ago. As an old hand in the high-wire game, I know that I have just related a fact. It is a lot different from what we oldtimers had to contend with in putting on our acts. In the old days I follow never knew beforehand when to set out to play an engagement whether the parties engaging his act were going to furnish him with 80, 90 or 100-foot poles for the erection of his high wire. Some of these poles were crude and crooked, too, and it was very seldom that the performer had the same height pole in successive engagements of wire between the poles to work on. This made a vast difference in one's balancing powers and in carrying out

the same routine of tricks at every performance. No doubt this is why the change has come about.

I have seen a lot of the present-day high-wire acts in operation and am of the opinion that they would not be able to accomplish the feats they are now doing on the fit-ups as provided us oldtimers. How could they perform them over such long stretches of wire as required at Niagara, Montgomery Falls, Genesee Gorge or from the tops of high buildings over streets as they are now so accustomed to perform between their own two special poles.

The methods used and feats performed nowadays, as compared with the same type of act of olden days, are naturally nothing but what would be expected in these so-called streamlined and progressive times, and, aside the present-day high-wire acts are introducing a different brand of feats. In another decade or two there will come into being entirely new high-wire acts that will put our performances in history without the aid of even a saluting pole.

Still am interested as ever

Since my retirement I have not lost interest in the profession and never miss an opportunity to witness an act still in operation. When doing so the old aerial spirit and the love for my profession always take a grip on me, so much so that I am not only captivated while watching every move of the performer, and I feel glad that I can relax when the act is ended.

When watching an act which I believe can take hold on me the real "true" can be had on me for some time in the business for so long a period, not long ago I attended the Shriners' Indoor Circus at the Maytag Lee Garden Show, accompanied by my little granddaughter. When the high-wire act was taking place she grabbed my arm and said: "Grandpa, you are not doing anything here. What is the matter with you?" Believes it or not, I was so "wowed up" that people all around us seemed as interested in my actions as I was. In other words, I could not control my feelings. Witnessing that high-wire troupe in action brought back many pleasant memories.

The act to which refer was a very clever one, put on by a troupe of five, naturally giving one another plenty of assistance in carrying out their routine of varied and amazing stunts.

Act's Sharp Today

So far as present-day high-wire acts are concerned, like in the past there are some really outstanding performers, and there are others that don't seem to fit into the picture. I believe I can still pick out a natural-born act and am always willing to give credit where credit is due. The present-day high-wire performers as I will admit, have a great task to perform than we performers of the past, and believe me, ours was hard enough. Today it not only requires skill and nerve, but it also requires a business tact to get spectators interested and to suit their different tastes. The public in general has become so much more critical that it is inclined to be skeptical and doesn't seem to appreciate the fine points of an act unless the stunts are daring to the extreme. When such stunts are given spectators roar with their approval and clamor for more.

In answering the question often asked me as to how I came to be in the present work of high-wire acts of the past with the present, I must say that my verdict is in favor of the present-day acts. The only reason for my preference is that the acts of the old school. As the performer of today who stands on the top rung of his professional ladder has outdistanced the performer of the past, so the present day has some of the present-day high-wire artists, advancing with the times, made their feet more daring and hampered, thus originating the present-day work in the category of a scientific performance. I wish all of them the best of luck and hope they will continue to advance in the complete mastery of their art for many years to come and uphold the prestige of the high-wire profession in the same manner as the high-wire artists of yesterday.

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