



The New York Public Library
Billy Rose Theatre Division

Guide to the

Century Flashlight Photographers circus photographs

1928-1936

*T-Vim 2017-011

Summary

Creator: Kelty, Edward J., 1888-1967

Title: Century Flashlight Photographers circus photographs

Date: 1928-1936

Size: 46 items, 46 photographs : gelatin silver, b&w ; 30.5 x 51 cm. and smaller

Source: Gift, Harry Baugh, circa 1944

Abstract: Large-format black and white photographs, primarily group portraits, by Edward Kelty's Century Flashlight Photographers company document twenty circus troupes performing in the Midwest, East Coast, and Montreal, Canada. Also included in this collection are two photographs of circus troupes taken by other photographers.

Preferred citation: Century Flashlight Photographers circus photographs, *T-Vim 2017-011. Billy Rose Theatre Division, The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts

Language of the Material: English

Processing note: Previously cataloged as MWEZ+++ n.c. 9337

Creator History

After World War I, Edward J. Kelty made his main living taking traditional banquet and party photographs for his Century Flashlight Photographers Company, based in New York City. During the summer months, Kelty used a custom-made large-format camera and portable darkroom and followed circus troupes around the East Coast and Midwest, taking some of the most vivid photographs known to circus historians. However, lingering injuries from his Navy service in World War I, other personal struggles, and the hardships of the Depression led to Kelty closing his business and selling his camera and negatives by the early 1940s. Kelty died in Chicago, Illinois, in 1967.

The donor of this collection, Harry Baugh, was an executive of circus troupes during the first part of the 20th-century and was a long-standing member of the Circus Fans Association.

Scope and Content Note

Large-format black and white photographs, primarily group portraits, by Edward Kelty's Century Flashlight Photographers company document twenty circus troupes performing in the Midwest, East Coast, and Montreal, Canada. Also included in this collection are two photographs of circus troupes taken by other photographers.

Arrangement: Photographs by the Century Flashlight Photography Company are arranged alphabetically by the name of the circus company or group depicted and therein chronologically by date. Two circus photographs by other photographers are listed last.

Key Terms

Subjects

Circus -- United States -- Pictorial works
Circus animals -- United States -- Pictorial works
Circus performers -- United States -- Portraits
Freak shows -- United States -- Pictorial works
Indian cowboys -- West (U.S.) -- History -- Pictorial works
Sideshows -- United States -- Pictorial works
Wild west shows -- United States -- Pictorial works

Genre/Physical Characteristic

Photographic prints

Names

Erlich, Jake, 1906-1952 -- Portraits.
Kelty, Edward J., 1888-1967
Mix, Tom, 1880-1940 -- Portraits.
Muse, George, 1890-1971 -- Portraits.
Muse, Willie, 1893-2001 -- Portraits.
Adam Forepaugh & Sells Bros. Circus -- Portraits.
Century Flashlight Photographers (New York, N.Y.)
Circus Fans Association of America -- Portraits.
Cole Bros.-Clyde Beatty Circus -- Portraits.
Downie Bros. Circus -- Portraits.
Hagenbeck-Wallace Circus -- Portraits.
Hunt Bros. Circus -- Portraits.
Kay Bros. Circus -- Portraits.
Ringling Brothers Barnum and Bailey Combined Shows -- Portraits.
Robbins Bros. Circus (1924-1931) -- Portraits.
Sells-Floto Circus -- Portraits.
Walter L. Main Circus -- Portraits.

Container List

- Almond and Conley Circus
 - b. 1 f. 1 Wildwood, New Jersey 1934 Sep 1
- Al G. Barnes Big 5 Ring Wild Animal Circus
 - b. 1 f. 2 Montreal, Canada 1934 Jul 21
- Barry Brothers Circus
 - b. 1 f. 3 Rockville Center, New York 1932 May 20
- Christie Bros. Wonder Show
 - b. 1 f. 4 Hempstead, New York 1929
- Circus Fans Association
 - b. 1 f. 5 9th annual banquet, Norwich Inn, Norwich, Connecticut 1934 Jun 24
- Cole Bros. - Clyde Beatty Circus
 - b. 1 f. 6 Altoona, Pennsylvania 1935 Jul 26
 - b. 1 f. 6 Cumberland, Maryland 1935 Jul 27
 - b. 1 f. 6 Marietta, Ohio 1935 Jul 29
- Downie Bros. Big 3 Ring Circus
 - b. 1 f. 7 Middletown, New York 1933 Aug 5
 - b. 1 f. 7 During the Circus Fans Association Convention, Norwich, Connecticut 1934 Jun 25
 - b. 1 f. 7 Norwich, Connecticut 1934 Jun 25
- Gorman Bros. Circus
 - b. 1 f. 8 Glen Cove, New York 1935 Jun 24
- Hagenbeck-Wallace Circus
 - b. 1 f. 9 Baggage stock, New Brunswick, New Jersey 1931 Jun 17
 - b. 1 f. 9 Executive staff, New Brunswick, New Jersey 1931 Jun 17
 - b. 1 f. 9 Brooklyn, New York 1932 Jun 11
 - b. 1 f. 9 Stamford, Connecticut 1933 Jun 26
 - b. 1 f. 9 St. Louis, Missouri 1934 May 11
 - b. 1 f. 9 Terre Haute, Indiana 1934 May 17
 - b. 1 f. 9 With Forepaugh-Sells Circus, combined side show performers, Reading, Pennsylvania 1935 Aug 7
 - b. 1 f. 9 With Forepaugh-Sells Circus, Chester, Pennsylvania 1935 Aug 10
- Hunt's Three Ring Circus
 - b. 1 f. 10 Tarrytown, New York 1933 Jun 14
- Kay Bros. Circus
 - b. 1 f. 11 Wallingford, Connecticut 1934 Jun 26
 - b. 1 f. 11 Madison, New Jersey 1936 Jun 3
- McDonough's Spa
 - b. 1 f. 12 "Always Circus Day," New York, New York circa 1930s
- Milliken Bros
 - b. 1 f. 13 Long Lake, New York 1935 Jul 13

Ringling Bros and Barnum and Bailey Combined Circus

- b. 1 f. 14 Portrait collage, Madison Square Garden, New York, New York 1929
- b. 1 f. 14 Irvington, New York 1931 Jun 9
- b. 1 f. 14 Madison Square Garden, New York, New York 1932
- b. 1 f. 14 Congress of Freaks 1932
Performers depicted include brothers George Muse and Willie Muse and Jack Earle.
- b. 1 f. 14 Irvington, New York 1934 May 23
- b. 1 f. 14 New Haven, Connecticut 1934 May 28
- b. 1 f. 14 Springfield, Massachusetts 1934 Jun 23
- b. 1 f. 14 Brooklyn, New York 1935 May 18

Robbins Brothers Circus

- b. 1 f. 15 Buck Owen's Wild West and Robbins Bros. Circus Band, York, Pennsylvania
1931 Jun 24
- b. 1 f. 15 York, Pennsylvania 1931 Jun 24

Sam B. Dill's Circus

- b. 1 f. 16 Mineola, New York 1933 Jun 19

Sells-Floto Circus

- b. 1 f. 17 Swinging ladders, double trap, contortionist and head balance acts, Jersey City, New Jersey 1931 Jun 19
- b. 1 f. 17 Tom Mix and his Cowboys and Cowgirls, Jersey City, New Jersey 1931 Jun 19
- b. 1 f. 17 Patterson, New Jersey 1931 Jun 20
- b. 1 f. 17 With Tom Mix, Binghampton, New York 1931 Jun 22
- b. 1 f. 17 The Danwills, the Orantos, the Monge Troupe, and the 3 1/2 Arleys circa 1931

Sparks Circus

- b. 1 f. 18 Bayside, New York 1929 Jun 5

Walter L. Main Circus

- b. 1 f. 19 Tupper Lake, New York 1935 Jun 15

Wheeler-Almond Circus

- b. 1 f. 20 Highstown, New Jersey 1933 Jul 13

Other photographers

- b. 1 f. 21 Mighty Haag Show, [Rockville, Indiana?] 1928
McClain (Rockville, Ind.) (Photographer)
- b. 1 f. 21 Russell Bros. Circus leaving winter quarters, Rolla, Missouri 1934 Apr 20
Baumgardner Studio (Rolla, Mo.) (Photographer)