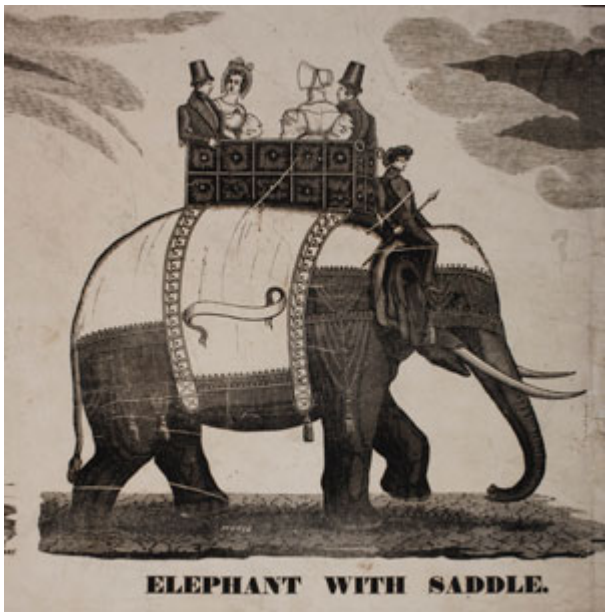
Menageries and Markets: The Zoological Institute tours Jacksonian America



One of the most enjoyable experiences of my initial visit to the American Antiquarian Society some years ago was an afternoon spent browsing through the library's oversized broadsides and posters. Through a familiarity with the literature on circus history, I was well aware that there were some significant examples of early American show printing in the collections, but the inadequacy of these published accounts and illustrations became readily apparent when I arrived at an 1835 poster for a division of the "Zoological Institute" (fig. 1). The poster proclaimed the varied attractions of a traveling menagerie with a spectacular mix of display types and some three dozen woodcuts, but at just over 6 ½ feet across and over nine feet tall, perhaps its most noteworthy feature was its enormous size. While its measurements and extravagance were immediately apparent and impressive, what I soon began to appreciate was that the poster was "big" in many different ways.

For one, the poster reflected the size and scope of the venture for which it was commissioned, namely the Zoological Institute, an association of showmen and investors that effectively monopolized the menagerie business in the years leading up to the Panic of 1837. Various forms of commercial entertainment burgeoned in urban centers like Philadelphia and New York during the late eighteenth century. But it was not until the early nineteenth century that traveling shows developed to bring these novel forms to the broader, and still largely rural, national public. Menageries were the most prominent and perhaps the most profitable form of these emerging itinerant entertainments. Though there were certainly sporadic commercial exhibitions of wild animals in North America prior to the nineteenth century, it was the arrival of the first elephants in 1796 and 1804, and the success that attended their exhibition,

which spurred the rapid expansion of the business. By the 1820s, a dozen or so menageries—collections of animals rather like a traveling zoo—were touring the country with ever-larger and more exotic combinations of creatures and attractions. During the 1829 season, for example, Charles Wright became the first keeper advertised as entering the cage of a big cat, and this popular feature was soon widely adopted. At the same time, leading menageries intensified their efforts to acquire more numerous and novel animals from around the globe. In 1830, one of the largest concerns, June, Titus, & Co., imported the first living rhinoceros for the edification and enjoyment of American audiences.

Fig. 1. “The Association’s Celebrated and Extensive Menagerie and Aviary from their Zoological Institute in the City of New York…,” broadside, printed by Jared W. Bell. Includes woodcuts signed by A.A. Lansing, Morse, A. Bowen, C. Huestis, and Childs, 277.1 x 196.6 cm (New York, 1835). Courtesy of the American Antiquarian Society, Worcester, Massachusetts. Click to enlarge in new window.

The culmination of a decade of development and consolidation in the menagerie business was the formation of the Zoological Institute in January 1835 at Somers, New York, a town about fifty miles north of New York City that was the center of the animal trade. Somers attained this distinction via the efforts of a resident named Hachaliah Bailey, who parlayed an early interest in the elephant that came to be known as “Old Bet” (1804-1816) into a small fortune. Bailey’s success led a number of other local entrepreneurs to become involved in various kinds of itinerant entertainment. By the late 1820s, a loose confederation of showmen from Westchester and Putnam Counties dominated the menagerie business and also played a defining role in the evolution of the American circus.

Although the menagerie was eventually subordinated by the circus, during the

1830s they were distinctly different forms of entertainment that were more often seen separately than in combination. The early American circuses were more or less equestrian shows and featured trick and acrobatic riding that involved dancing, posing, and jumping off and on a horse as it galloped around the ring. These equestrian feats were often interspersed with a comic song from a clown or some vaulting, rope-dancing, or other acrobatic acts, but the main draw was the riders. Companies usually consisted of some half-dozen performers, and until the turn to canvas tents in the late 1820s, they were generally limited to performing in semi-permanent wooden structures in urban centers. Menageries, on the other hand, proved much more mobile and, perhaps more importantly, they were much less susceptible to prevailing mores and concerns about their propriety. Everything from the use of female performers to the rough crowds that touring shows could attract made the circus objectionable to many Americans, leading some states like Vermont and Connecticut to ban the circus outright.

Menageries mitigated these concerns by presenting their attractions as edifying and in the words of the poster, “Embracing all the Subjects of Natural History.” The fact that the men who founded the Zoological Institute adopted the nomenclature of an “institute,” a term more common to learned societies than entertainments, suggests something about showmen’s attempts to alleviate potential public approbation by emphasizing the educational value of their exhibitions. While the appearance of such lofty motivations was important for publicity purposes, antebellum menageries were clearly driven by economic rather than educational imperatives. They were both capital-intensive and risky ventures: exotic animals were expensive to acquire and not easy to keep in good health. Although the itinerant mode adopted by most menageries proved profitable, travel was often difficult, and as the number of shows increased, competition was beginning to hurt everyone’s bottom line.


ZOOLOGICAL INSTITUTE
ASSOCIATION.
No. 15
This is to Certify, That Charles Wright
is entitled to
One Hundred & Twenty Shares in the Capital
Stock, or Fund and Property, of the ZOOLOGICAL INSTITUTE, transferable only
on the transfer Books of the Association, by the said Charles Wright
or Attorney,
on surrender of this Certificate. And each and every Share, or part of a Share, and
all Shares are to be transferred subject to all liens, encumbrances,
charges, and liabilities for all debts and demands, due to the Association from any former
owner thereof under the Articles of Association, or to which the same would be subject in
the hands of any former owner.
In Testimony Whereof, The Directors of the Board of Directors, hath hereunto set their hands, this
Twenty first day of February 1835
BY ORDER OF THE BOARD,
120 Shares Hiram Waring Secretary

Fig. 2. Share of the Zoological Institute, 1835. Note that this certificate for 120 shares was for Charles Wright, a Somers native and menagerie man who was probably the first American lion tamer. Courtesy of the Collections of the Somers Historical Society, Somers, New York. Click to enlarge in new window.

The answer to these difficulties was the Zoological Institute, a capital stock company formed on January 14, 1835, in Somers, New York. The "Articles of Association" were signed by a collection of menagerie and circus owners and outside investors, many of whom were local farmers. They established "an association denominated The Zoological Institute which it is proposed to maintain for keeping a large collection of rare and curious animals and exhibiting them for the joint benefit, interest, and advantage of the owners thereof at such times and places in such lots and such parcels and in such manner as shall best promote their interests and by means of which the knowledge of natural history may be more generally diffused and promoted and rational curiosity satisfied." This language effectively married the pursuit of economic gain with public service, and in purely economic terms, it was an impressive venture. The Zoological Institute combined the resources of some dozen menageries and three circuses whose appraised value in conjunction with cash raised from investors gave the corporation $329,325 in total capital (fig. 2). A board of five directors managed the overall enterprise, and there were major menageries employing some variation of the Zoological Institute title in Boston, Albany, Baltimore, Philadelphia, and Cincinnati during the winter of 1835. The directors reorganized the constituent shows into thirteen units and proscribed routes for the subsequent touring season in such a way as to mitigate competition and maximize profits. Much like the posters that announced its presence, the Zoological Institute reflected an enormous investment of capital. As a purveyor of popular entertainment, it was unprecedented in its size and level of organization.

Fig. 3. Bowery Theatre, New York City, 1826, from Samuel Hollyer, Old New York Views (New York, s.n., 1905-1914). Courtesy of the New York Public Library.

The grandest of the permanent venues, and the unit for which the American Antiquarian Society's poster was produced, was in New York City, which was not coincidentally well on its way to becoming the center of the emerging popular entertainment and printing industries in the United States. A newly constructed building at 37 Bowery housed the association's largest collection of animals until the show went back on the road in the spring of 1835. The Zoological Institute was located nearly opposite the Bowery Theatre one block north of Chatham Square at the intersection with Bayard Street, and it was one of many

local attractions that turned the Bowery into a locus for commercial leisure (fig. 3). Entry to the Institute was twenty-five cents (twelve and a half for children), and it was open from ten in the morning through nine in the evening. The *New-York Spectator* of December 4, 1834, offered the following description of the new menagerie:

> The saloon in which the animals are exhibited is a spacious and noble apartment—which is brilliantly lit at night by three magnificent cut glass lustres. The cages are contrived so as to form an architectural embellishment of the room, being divided by pilasters, which seem to support the large and commodious gallery which runs around the whole. The name of each animal is inscribed on a gilt label over its appropriate dwelling, thus leaving every visitor to learn and admire for himself. The gallery could probably accommodate seven or eight hundred persons, and is provided with cushioned seats—the orchestra occupying the entrance end. Branching from the gallery are two elegantly furnished retiring saloons for ladies; the whole forming an establishment unequalled in this, or, we may add, in any other country,—and which, will ever in future constitute one of the first and greatest attractions of our city.

Fig. 4. “Isaac Van Amburgh,” page 9, A Biographical Sketch of I.A. Van Amburgh: and an Illustrated and Descriptive History of the Animals contained in this Mammoth Menagerie and Great Moral Exhibition…, by H. Frost, Manager (New York, 1862). Courtesy of the American Antiquarian Society, Worcester, Massachusetts.

A band of musicians further contributed to the refined atmosphere that the managers so clearly wanted to foment. The great draw, though, was Isaac Van

Amburgh, a young keeper who entered the cages and violently toyed with the big cats (fig. 4). It was here that Van Amburgh began his ascent to transatlantic fame and fortune with acts such as prying open and thrusting his head into the jaws of a tiger and introducing a lamb into the cage to demonstrate his mastery over the ostensibly savage beasts. That the directors of the Zoological Institute invested such resources and apportioned many of their best attractions to the New York division was an apt indication of the extent to which that city had become the cultural and commercial capital of the United States.

The directors also clearly understood that the publicity for their signature division should be as large and lavish as the menagerie itself. In this they were aided by R. Hoe & Co., an innovative printing press manufacturer based in New York City that was also a signatory to the “Articles of Association” and thus had a vested interest in the Zoological Institute’s success. Along the bottom of the poster, a notice reads that it was “Printed by Jared W. Bell, Franklin Hall, 17 Ann-Street, New-York, on his Improved Napier Cylinder Press, the Largest in the World.” The cylindrical press that Bell bragged about was constructed and installed in his shop by R. Hoe & Co. in February 1835 expressly to produce bills for the Zoological Institute (fig. 5). The size and speed of the new machine was widely noted in contemporary newspapers, which indicated that it cost $4000 and was capable of printing an area of sixty by forty inches. As technological advances allowed for increasingly elaborate and high-volume printing at reduced costs, American showmen began spending more money on advertising in an attempt to boost profits and outdo their competition. Prior to the 1830s, most show printing in the United States was done by local job offices or newspaper presses, but in New York City, printers like Jonas Booth and Jared W. Bell began to specialize in posters for the growing commercial entertainment industry. By the early 1830s, Bell had found a niche producing large posters for menageries, several examples of which can be found at the American Antiquarian Society and at the Circus World Museum in Baraboo, Wisconsin. But there were technical and no doubt financial limitations on these earlier efforts that rendered them far less impressive in terms of size and quality than the posters produced in the spring of 1835 for the Zoological Institute.

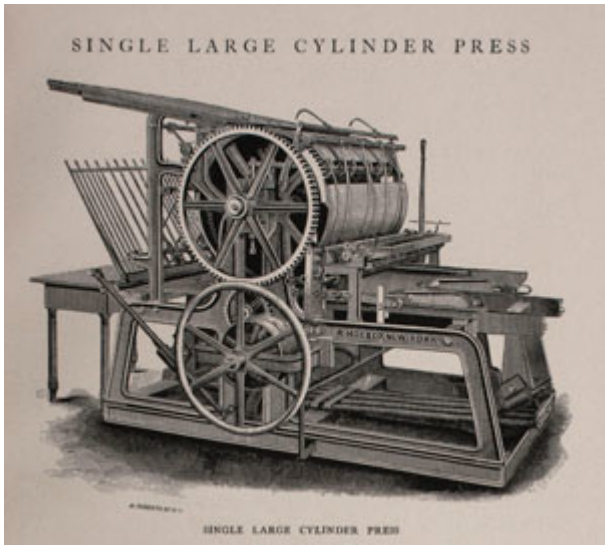


Fig. 5. “Single Large Cylinder Press,” engraved by W. Roberts, page 19, A Short History of the Printing Press, by Robert Hoe (New York, 1902). Courtesy of the American Antiquarian Society, Worcester, Massachusetts.

A close examination of the Zoological Institute poster offers a window into the technology that facilitated the nineteenth-century’s print and graphic revolutions. The most obvious change here was the new press designed by R. Hoe & Co., which was a single cylinder model based on a design by British manufacturer David Napier. Though crude by later standards, it used steam power and was much more efficient than the comparatively cumbersome letterpress. The use of a cylinder meant that it printed much more evenly and quickly, and across a much larger area than heretofore possible. Although Bell had produced some large multi-sheet woodblock posters prior to 1835, the new press allowed the work to be done in a much more efficient and presumably economical manner. The Zoological Institute poster is actually made up of four separately printed sheets that the advance agent or biller reassembled as it was posted. This manner of advertising using large or multi-sheet posters became the standard mode for menageries and circuses and, with the gradual introduction of color and lithography, drove the production of the magnificent posters for which the American circus is best remembered.

While I was certainly impressed on first viewing the poster, an antebellum viewer would have been astounded by the size and style of the typefaces and the magnitude of the illustrations. Even with the new press, the production of such a poster was a “big” process, the result of an enormous amount of labor on the part of the printers who assembled the text, illustrations, and decorations. The Zoological Institute poster has at least fifteen different typefaces, and the so-called display or large types employed here were particularly difficult to produce. It was only in 1827 that New York City printer Darius Wells had perfected a method that allowed for the mass production of wood type using a lateral router. It was this breakthrough that allowed Bell’s shop to use the mix of large and attractive wood type that got people’s attention. The header effectively mixes several different styles of big and bold type commonly known as “fat face” that heightened the contrast between thin and thick strokes and

that was particularly forceful on the large formats advertisers demanded. Although somewhat crude and plain compared to the fancy types of the following decades, flourishes like the large Roman open shaded typeface used for the “MENAGERIE AND AVIARY” line, which was over four inches tall, were novelties. Other interesting notes concerning the type gesture toward the new demands that the press and format made on printers. The first observation is simply that some of the type, such as the Gothic (sans-serif) used for “IN THE CITY OF NEW YORK,” was both crudely fabricated and poorly set, which was likely due to the fact that there the poster required much more and larger type than was heretofore necessary. The last three rows of animal labels perhaps offer a further indication that the printer was running out of type in that they mix a Roman fat face with an italicized and an Antique typeface. The occasional unevenness of the text and illustrations also suggests that there was a learning curve with the operation of the new press.

With over three dozen individual woodcuts, undoubtedly the most arresting feature of the poster was the number and quality of its illustrations. The production of these images was a time-consuming and expensive process that would have required a team of skilled artisans. The illustrations set four across like the cage wagons at bottom would have required woodcuts measuring eighteen by twelve inches, and even the smaller appearing illustrations set eight across like the “Porcupine” were large at around nine by eight inches. As a matter of perspective, the “Dromedary” pictured just to the right and below center is the same size as a standard sheet of 8 ½ by 11 paper. Most of the work on these woodcuts was done anonymously and much of it was likely copied from natural history books like Thomas Bewick’s *A General History of Quadrupeds* (1790), but at least five of the engravers are identifiable. The most famous of these was undoubtedly Abel Bowen, a noted Boston printer, who cut the figure of the “Puma” (fig. 6) at the center of the second row from the bottom. The fact that his work appeared on a poster produced in New York City was an indicator of the way printer’s blocks circulated, though it may also have been a stereotyped (i.e. copied) version. Another of the engravers was Alfred A. Lansing, who had done work for Bell on menagerie posters as early as 1831. He was responsible for three of the illustrations along the top of the poster that depicted a keeper with various big cats (fig. 7). It is unclear whether this was new work produced specifically for this poster, as Bell frequently reused woodcuts. The “Leopard” (fig. 8), for example, was previously printed on an 1831 poster for the “American National Caravan” at the American Antiquarian Society, one that also features work by Lansing.

Fig. 6. Broadside detail, “Puma,” engraved by Abel Bowen. Courtesy of the American Antiquarian Society, Worcester, Massachusetts.

The other identifiable contributors were New York City-based engravers Charles P. Huestis, Samuel Childs, and Joseph W. Morse. The most significant figure among these few was Morse, whose three signed woodcuts on the second row consist of “The Emeu,” a “Cassowara,” and perhaps the most technically accomplished woodcut on the poster, that of an “Elephant with Saddle” (fig. 9). Morse was a singularly important figure in the annals of American show printing. He created an engraving method in the late 1830s that utilized pine blocks that made the production of lavish, multi-colored posters much more economical. Jared W. Bell printed some wonderful color posters using woodblocks in the 1840s, and this production method dominated circus advertising through the end of the 1870s, when it was displaced by lithography. Although the appearance of the illustrations on the poster is uneven due to the varying quality of the woodcuts and the aforementioned printing issues on the new press, the size and quantity of illustrations was unprecedented, and it was naturally an effective advertisement for the show.

Fig. 7. Broadside detail, “Cape Lion, Lioness, and Tigress,” engraved by Alfred A. Lansing. Courtesy of the American Antiquarian Society, Worcester, Massachusetts.

The poster also makes use of a variety of decorative borders and bands that were fairly common in contemporary printing. The discerning observer will have

noted that what Bell printed was not, in fact, the finished poster, as the manicules or “printer’s fists” at center right point to spaces where the advance agent wrote in the location, date, and time of the show. Though it seems likely that at least some of the bills were posted in New York City as they were being produced in early 1835, they were actually printed for the menagerie’s planned summer tour through New England. The particular copy that made its way to the American Antiquarian Society was inscribed as follows for a date in Maine: “Clinton on Friday the 12th day of June 1835” (fig. 10). Both newspaper advertisements along the route and an illustrated pamphlet Bell also printed that was sold by the menagerie advised that: “For time and place of Exhibition, see large Bills in the principal Hotels.” An advance agent traveling a few weeks ahead of the show would thus have placed this particular Zoological Institute poster in a hotel or tavern in Clinton or some other nearby town. This method of advance billing soon became the standard mode of advertising for touring shows and reached its apogee with the railroad circuses of the late nineteenth century, which covered the country with brightly colored posters every summer. In the 1830s, this was still a relatively new practice, but it was proving to be an effective way of attracting the largest possible audience to the Zoological Institute’s menageries.

Fig. 8. Broadside detail, “Leopard.” Courtesy of the American Antiquarian Society, Worcester, Massachusetts.

As the weather and roads improved in the spring of 1835, “The Association’s Celebrated and Extensive Menagerie and Aviary from the Zoological Institute in the City of New York” headed north in a company that consisted of sixty-four men, including a band of fourteen musicians, several blackface minstrels, keeper Isaac Van Amburgh, and support personnel responsible for the difficult logistical work of caring for the animals and moving the show from town to town. Historian Stuart Thayer notes that this unit was the first show that is spoken of as traveling with pre-manufactured portable seating in the form of tiered bleachers, and its main tent was spacious enough to accommodate a ring in which it was advertised that patrons were able to ride the elephant on a “splendid” saddle “with perfect safety, and pleasure to themselves.” There seem to have been two main tents of roughly equal size that housed the principal attractions, while a separate smaller tent featured a museum of wax figures,

the minstrels, and some of the smaller reptiles and birds. This might have been done in deference to the aforementioned concerns about the morality of such displays, allowing audience members to forgo these attractions and simply see the animals. Whatever the case, this menagerie was the biggest traveling show in the United States to date and was transported by a train of forty-seven wagons and carriages drawn by 120 gray horses. It displayed over 100 varieties of “birds and beasts” among its three tents. Although the precise animals displayed by menageries were often at odds with their advertised attractions (due in no small part to animal attrition), this Zoological Institute unit seems to have shown most of what was billed, including a polar bear, two elephants, kangaroos, three tigers, an ostrich, a buffalo, and the now extinct quagga (fig. 11). The range of animals pictured in the poster and displayed in the exhibition was a visual index of the transnational dimensions of, and the prominent role that menageries played in, the expanding American entertainment industry.

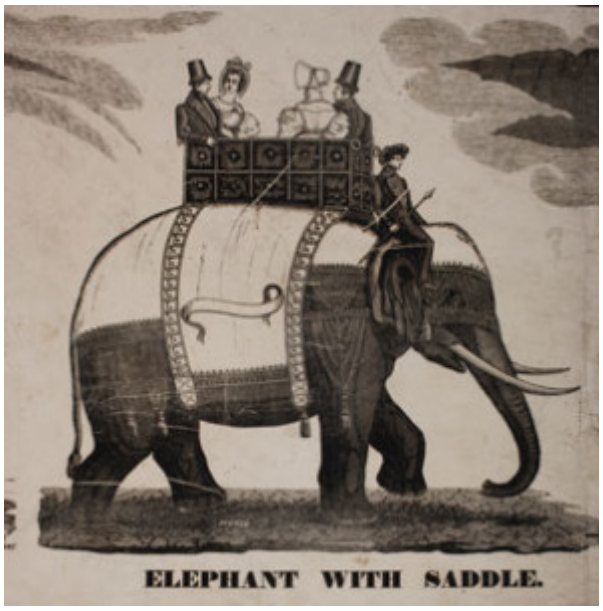


Fig. 9. Broadside detail, “Elephant with Saddle,” engraved by Joseph W. Morse. Courtesy of the American Antiquarian Society, Worcester, Massachusetts.

The star animal of the show as indicated by its advertising was the “Unicorn: or One Horned Rhinoceros,” which was featured on the poster front and center in a cage wagon drawn by a team of six horses. The rhinoceros was a relatively recent addition to American menageries, and this was perhaps why it received top billing over the two elephants, which were by this point fairly common. The rhino also provides a good example of the advantages the Zoological Institute structure extended to the menageries operating under its auspices. When the rhinoceros suddenly died only a few days out of New York City in April, the directors were able to replace it just weeks later with a fresh specimen; the new rhino arrived courtesy of an agent of the association who had just returned from a mission to South Africa with a ship full of animals. With control of thirteen of the twenty circuses and menageries that toured in 1835, the

directors of the Zoological Institute were able to maximize their profits by effectively apportioning resources and proscribing routes for the various divisions.

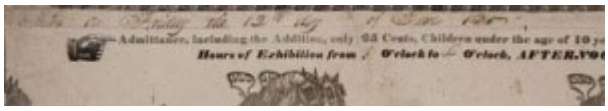


Fig. 10. Detail of broadside annotation, “Clinton on Friday the 12th day of June 1835.” Courtesy of the American Antiquarian Society, Worcester, Massachusetts.

The Zoological Institute also clearly delivered a first-class show. A review of the New York unit in the *Newburyport Herald* of May 12 praised the association as follows:

> By this amalgamation of interests, the proprietors are enabled greatly to swell the number of animals in each collection, and to furnish their fellow countrymen with an occasional exhibition of unrivaled splendour, instead of frequent parades of a few minor quadrapeds. The system of management, too, is altogether on an improved plan; and the directors express their determination to purge this species of amusement of every thing to which the most rigid moralist could object, and to elevate the study of Zoology by living demonstrations, to a standard unrivalled in any age or country.

The level of organization and enterprise of the Zoological Institute celebrated by the Massachusetts newspaper was aptly reflected in the New York unit’s immense bills, and as its bandwagon rolled into Clinton in June 1835, it heralded the arrival of more than just a menagerie. The Zoological Institute represented a fundamental shift in the way that popular entertainment was being produced and consumed, and its poster stands as a visual and material expression of the market revolution in the United States.

Interested readers should note that the Zoological Institute poster will be on display as part of an upcoming exhibition, “Circus and the City,” at the Bard Graduate Center, from September 12, 2012, to February 3, 2013.

Fig. 11. Broadside detail, “Quagga.” Courtesy of the American Antiquarian Society, Worcester, Massachusetts.

Further reading:

The best source on early circuses and menageries is Stuart Thayer’s *Annals of the American Circus, 1793-1860* (3 vols., 1976, 1986, and 1992; combined ed., 2000); see also his *Traveling Showmen* (Detroit, 1997) for an invaluable study of how touring shows operated in the antebellum era. Janet Davis’ *The Circus Age: Culture and Society under the American Big Top* (Chapel Hill, 2000) is the key academic text on the development of the circus in the United States during the nineteenth century. For a recent monograph that usefully employs a regional focus, see Gregory J. Renoff, *The Big Tent: The Traveling Circus in Georgia, 1820-1930* (Athens, 2008). See also, David Carlyon, *Dan Rice: The Most Famous Man You’ve Never Heard Of* (New York, 2001).

On early menageries, see Brett Mizelle, “‘To the Curious’: the Cultural Work of Exhibitions of Exotic and Performing Animals in the Early American Republic” (PhD diss., University of Minnesota, 2000) and “‘I Have Brought my Pig to a Fine Market’: Animals, Their Exhibitors, and Market Culture in the Early Republic,” in *Cultural Change and the Market Revolution in America, 1789-1860*, ed. Scott Martin (Lanham, 2005): 181-216. See also Richard W. Flint, “Entrepreneurial and Cultural Aspects of the Early-Nineteenth-Century Circus and Menagerie Business,” in *Itinerancy in New England and New York*, eds. Peter Benes and Jane Montague (Boston, 1986): 131-149. Joanne Joys’ *The Wild Animal Trainer in America* (Boulder, 1983) and “The Wild Things” (PhD diss., Bowling Green University, 2011) examine the history of animal acts. For a plethora of histories on specific animals, ranging from “Circus Rhinos” to “Circus Zebras,” see the many articles published by Richard Reynolds in Bandwagon: The Journal of Circus Historical Society. A broader look at the relationship between menageries and modern zoos can be found in R. J. Hoage and William A. Deiss, eds., *New Worlds, New Animals: From Menagerie to Zoological Park in the Nineteenth Century* (Baltimore, 1996).

For an excellent analysis of the evolution of circuses and show printing, see Richard Flint, "A Great Industrial Art: Circus Poster Printing in America" in *Printing History* 26 (2009): 18-43. Charles Philip Fox and Tom Parkinson's *Billers, Banners, and Bombast: The Story of Circus Advertising* (Boulder, 1985) gives a good overview of the subject and includes many illustrations. Although largely focused on a later era when chromolithography was ascendant, a number of important essays about circus advertising can be found in Kristin Spangenberg and Deborah W. Walk, eds. *The Amazing American Circus Poster: The Strobridge Lithographing Company* (Cincinnati and Sarasota, 2011).

The literature on the printing revolution in the United States is vast, but for a useful introduction to the "circus atmosphere" that pervaded pre-Civil War print culture, see Isabelle Lehru, *Carnival on the Page: Popular Print Media in Antebellum America* (Chapel Hill, 2000). On the R. Hoe & Company printing presses, see Robert Hoe, *A Short History of the Printing Press* (New York, 1902) and Frank E. Comparato, *Chronicles of Genius and Folly: R. Hoe & Company and the Printing Press as a Service to Democracy* (Culver City, 1979). On nineteenth-century New York printing houses and techniques, see Stephen O. Saxe, et al., *Billheads & Broadsides: Job Printing in the 19th-century Seaport* (New York, 1985). For more about woodcuts, see W. J. Linton, *The History of Wood Engraving in America* (Boston, 1882). Although ostensibly focused on a particular subset of the industry, Rob Roy Kelly's *American Wood Type, 1828-1900* (New York, 1969) offers a more or less comprehensive overview of nineteenth-century printing. For some fine recent work on the subject, see Doug Clouse, *Mackellar, Smiths & Jordan: Typographic Tastemakers of the Late Nineteenth Century* (New Castle, 2008) and, with Angela Voulangas, *The Handy Book of Artistic Printing* (Princeton, 2009).

Although there are many collections of circus posters and ephemera in various institutions around the country, the John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art has made a salutary effort to make their extensive holdings available online and interested readers can access those here and here.

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Matthew Wittmann is a postdoctoral fellow at the Bard Graduate Center, where he is curating an exhibition about the history of the circus in New York City and co-editing a book, *The American Circus*, which will be published by Yale University in 2012. He is also working on a transnational cultural history of U.S. entertainers who traveled around the Pacific during the nineteenth century.