

A TIMELINE OF CIRCUS HISTORY

1. 1768 Philip Astleyno !!! that's Rick AstleyIn 1768 Philip Astley is the first person to bring together the elements of Circus.
2. 1797 John Bill Ricketts presents the first circus in Philadelphia on 4 August
3. In the same year Philip Lailson sends his performers in costume out onto the streets of Philadelphia hoping to drum up business for his circus – the first circus parade is born.
4. J Purdy Brown is the first to order a canvas tent for his circus in 1825, Brown realised he would have the ability to move every day with a tent and could therefore reach more people and make more money.
5. It was in 1843 that Charles Sherwood Stratton better known as General Tom Thumb made his first appearance with circus pioneer PT Barnum, he was only 5 years old, but Barnum made the claim that he was 11, he grew to a maximum height of 99cm or 3 Feet 3 Inches.
6. 1857 saw the first Steam Calliope or Steam Organ, a unique and very loud addition to circus parades.
7. P T Barnum together with William C Coup and Dan Castello move their entire shows by train in 1872 but small circuses were still travelling by wagon, some, more successfully than others.
8. In 1882, Barnum brought 'Jumbo' the Elephant to the United States, the word Jumbo came to be used as an synonym for large.
9. Buffalo Bill, William F Cody performed his first 'Wild West' show at the Rocky Mountain and Prairee Exhibition
10. 1884 saw Al, Otto, Alf, Charles and John Ringling give their very first performance as The Ringling Brothers, Worlds Greatest Show in Baraboo, Wisconsin

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11. The Adam Forepaugh Circus presented the First wild Animal act in a circus arena in 1891 in the same year that the internationally famous P T Barnum died
12. On a happier note 1892 saw the very first Hamburger. Frank Menches was selling food concessions at circuses, at one he ran out of link sausages, so he instructed his assistants to form ground sausage into patties and sell them in sandwiches, the Hamburger was born.
13. In 1896 Barnum & Bailey exhibited a horseless carriage in their circus parade.
14. The Ringling Brothers purchased Barnum & Bailey Greatest Show on Earth in 1907 and they are combined into one giant circus show, The Big Show in 1919
15. Walt Disney step in the Circus arena by releasing Dumbo in 1941. World War 2 had made it difficult for circuses to find young men to work, however, the war gave industries a boost that provided Americans with more money to attend circuses more often and the circus business boomed

16. In 1944 disaster struck a performance of 'The Big Show'. On the 6th July, the big top tent caught fire and within 9 minutes the tent collapsed. 168 people died in the Tragedy. Six Circus officials were sent to prison and new laws were passed to protect spectators as a result.
17. 1956 saw the last tented show on 16th July, from now on all shows would exclusively be performed in indoor arenas.
18. A Clown college was opened in 1968 in Venice Florida by the Ringling Brothers, the college opened its doors to female Clowns in 1970
19. The Twin Towers in New York featured in a daring High Wire Walk performed by Phillipe Petit in 1974, over 1350 feet above the streets of Manhattan.
20. There is still no law in this country which bans wild animals being used for circus entertainment