

0. CIRCUS PERFORMERS from the 1930s - Story
Preface

1. THE CIRCUS DURING the 1930s

2. CIRCUS PERFORMERS from the 1930s

3. ROSIE the CIRCUS ELEPHANT

4. GREAT CIRCUS DISASTERS



Flying acrobats, always a major-attraction at a circus, were huge stars during the 1930s. This image, from the U.S. National Archives, depicts Antoinette Concello—and a male partner—on the "flying trapeze."

In *Water for Elephants*, Marlena is the star performer in the Benzini Bros. Circus. Before she meets Jacob Jankowski, she is married to August (the owner, trainer and principal act-creator for the traveling troupe).

Although Benzini Brothers is a fictional company, the story is based on the reality of circus life in the 1930s. Who were some of the performers at that time?

- Marlena and Rosie - Stars of the Circus
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- Clyde Beatty - The Famous Lion Trainer

Some of the most-loved circus performers are the animals. In *Water for Elephants*, it could be said that Rosie steals the show.

In the 1930s, there actually was a real-life, circus-performing Asian elephant named "Rosie." Let's investigate what made her so famous.

See [Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:](http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/CIRCUS-PERFORMERS-from-the-1930s-Water-for-Elephants)

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/CIRCUS-PERFORMERS-from-the-1930s-Water-for-Elephants>

See Learning Tasks for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicActivities/CIRCUS-PERFORMERS-from-the-1930s-Water-for-Elephants>

Media Stream



Elephants with Performers - Circus, 1931

Photo online, courtesy Library of Congress.

View this asset at: <http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Elephants-with-Performers-Circus-1931>



Elephants and the Crowd - Circus, 1930s Style

Vintage circus photo, c. 1931, online courtesy Library of Congress.

View this asset at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Elephants-and-the-Crowd-Circus-1930s-Style>



Circus Production - At the Circus

Photo online, Library of Congress.

View this asset at: <http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Circus-Production-At-the-Circus>



Codona and Leitzel - Star Circus Performers

Photo of Alfredo Codona and Lillian Leitzel, online courtesy Library of Congress.

View this asset at: <http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Codona-and-Leitzel-Star-Circus-Performers>



"Circus Fat Man" - Side Show

Image online, courtesy Wisconsin Historical Society. LICENSE: CC BY-SA 3.0.

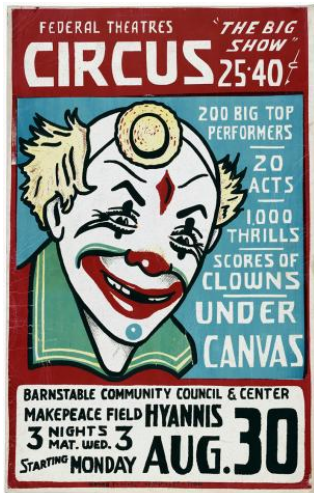
View this asset at: <http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/-Circus-Fat-Man-Side-Show>



Circus Lion - Star Performer

Image online, courtesy U.S. National Archives.

View this asset at: <http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Circus-Lion-Star-Performer>



Federal Theatre Project - Unemployed Performers Get Jobs

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Burt Lancaster - Circus Performer with Federal Theatre Project

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Burt Lancaster - On the Circus Parallel Bars

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Maria Rasputin - Daughter of Russian Monk

Image of Maria Rasputin, with her parents, online courtesy Wikimedia Commons.

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View this asset at: <http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Maria-Rasputin-Daughter-of-Russian-Monk>



Clyde Beatty Training Lions

Circa 1932 photo of Clyde Beatty, online courtesy Encyclopedia Britannica (via courtesy of Circus World Museum, Baraboo, Wis., and Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus).

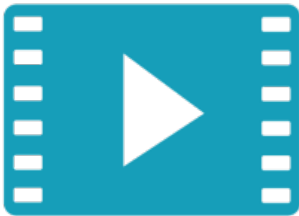
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Benzini Bros. Circus Train

Video of TVRM 610 pulling the Benzini Bros. Circus train, online courtesy TNtrainboy15's Channel at YouTube.

View this asset at: <http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Benzini-Bros.-Circus-Train>



Lillian Leitzel - Historical Footage

Video of Leitzel performance, c. 1928, online courtesy Stleonm's Channel at YouTube.

View this asset at: <http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Lillian-Leitzel-Historical-Footage>