

# Reminisce News

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## December Is a Circus

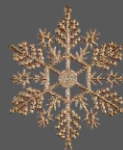
Charles Ringling, born on December 2, 1863, was one of seven Ringling brothers to operate the Ringling Bros. Circus, a traveling act that became the largest and most famous circus in the world by 1930.

Four of the seven Ringling brothers were born in Iowa. It was there that they saw a circus unloaded off the back of a steamboat, a scene that inspired them to develop their own traveling act. In 1872, the family moved to Wisconsin, a state renowned as an overwintering destination for the nation's circuses. Perhaps the move was destiny. The Ringlings showcased their variety show across the state, performing musical numbers, skits, and juggling routines. They used their earnings to purchase suits and top hats, and later added a donkey, Shetland pony, and a bear to their act. By 1887, Charles oversaw the production of a massive show starring all seven Ringling brothers and various exotic animals such as tigers, elephants, and camels. He called the act *Ringling Bros. United Monster Shows, Great Double Circus, Royal European Menagerie, Museum, Caravan, and Congress of Trained Animals*.

The Ringling Bros. eventually caught the attention of the famous Barnum & Bailey Circus. The two companies agreed to avoid direct competition by splitting the U.S. into territories, but after the death of James Bailey in 1906, Ringling Bros. purchased the Barnum & Bailey Circus to become the largest circus in the world and the self-proclaimed "Greatest Show on Earth."

The "Greatest Show" would not be great forever. The public would lose their taste for the traveling circus and its exotic animals. In 2017, the Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus performed its final show. Yet the end of the Ringling Bros. did not mean the end of circuses altogether. Other acts such as Cirque du Soleil and Circus Vargas continue to entertain audiences across the globe, showcasing performers who demonstrate feats of human strength, balance, and flexibility. Audiences, it seems, still crave the art and spectacle of the circus.













Merry  
Christmas

