

HISTORICAL SOCIETY NOTES AND DOCUMENTS

“‘BOB’ HUNTING’S GREAT SHOW”:

The Diary of a Pennsylvania Circus

Edited by H. ROGER GRANT

SINCE the early days of the Republic, Americans have enjoyed the traveling circus. This form of popular entertainment rapidly became a national institution. “During [the nineteenth century],” noted one circus historian, “the appearance of billowing white tops on a meadow near the edge of town signaled as well-established a holiday as Christmas or the Fourth of July.”¹ While the circus giants — Ringling Brothers, Barnum & Bailey, and Forepaugh Sells — are best known, scores of small, often short-lived shows performed throughout the country, particularly in the East and Midwest. In fact, the zenith of the American circus, at least in terms of the number of shows on the road, came in the 1880s and 1890s, when more than fifty operated.²

One show that flourished during the golden age of the circus was “Bob” Hunting’s Circus or “Great Show,” based in New Castle, Pennsylvania. Initially organized as the Hurlburt & Hunting Circus in 1885, the company became “Bob” Hunting’s three years later. It operated until 1898, performing in Pennsylvania and adjoining states.

Although this Pennsylvania show is known today only to circus buffs, the company is significant historically. “Bob” Hunting’s represents the typical small “railroad show” of the late nineteenth century. These shows, often simple business partnerships or family concerns, usually consisted of several railroad cars attached to regular freight or passenger trains and served the entertainment needs of a state or region. During the 1889 season, and for much of its existence, the “Bob”

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—Editor

1 Quotation in Ayres Davies, “Wisconsin, Incubator of the American Circus,” *Wisconsin Magazine of History* 26 (Mar. 1942): 283.

2 The leading works on the history of the circus in the United States are Earl Chapin May, *The Circus from Rome to Ringling* (New York, 1932) and George L. Chindahl, *A History of the Circus in America* (Caldwell, Idaho, 1959).

Hunting circus included one sixty-foot box car, one sixty-foot flat car, and one sixty-foot sleeping car. This equipment contained the show's essential paraphernalia: four horses and three ponies, a bandwagon, ticket wagon, and three baggage wagons, along with a 90 x 130-foot "Main Canvas," a 40-foot dressing tent, a 20 x 60-foot "Wizard's Annex" tent, a 20 x 40-foot cook tent, and a horse tent the same size.³

The overall nature and flavor of the show is found in the following edited account of the show's 1889 season. The author of this circus diary was Charles Eldridge Griffin (1859-1914). A native Iowan, Griffin led an active career as a professional performer and author-publisher of side-show pamphlets. While his greatest entertainment triumph was as side-show director for Buffalo Bill's second tour of Europe (1903-1906), Griffin served in a similar capacity ("manager of privileges") with the Hunting circus for twelve seasons, the entire life of the show.⁴

Of special interest in Griffin's diary is his description of the show's 1889 "circuit" and his attitudes toward fellow performers, circus patrons, and communities served. Explanatory notes have been added to clarify various material.⁵

* * *

NEW CASTLE, PA. April 29-May 1 — Population 18,000. N.Y., L. E. and W. R. R.⁶ Our people stopped at Robinson's Park House, where everything possible was done for the convenience and comfort of the company. This is Mr. Hunting's home. Despite the cold drizzling rain of April 30 and May 1, hundreds of people were turned away at the evening performances. The show is about the same as last season, with the exception of two new wagons and a sleeping coach added.

3 For a description of "Bob" Hunting's circus see Charles Eldridge Griffin, *Showman's Directory* (n.p., c.1890).

4 A biographical sketch of Griffin can be found in my article, "An Iowan with Buffalo Bill: Charles Eldridge Griffin in Europe, 1903-1906," *Palimpsest* 54 (Jan.-Feb. 1973): 2-13.

5 A typed copy of Griffin's 1889 diary of the Hunting circus is in the possession of the author. And the author wishes to thank John W. Griffin of Albia, Iowa, for supplying material relating to Mr. Griffin's uncle.

6 The "N.Y., L.E. and W. R.R." is the New York, Lake Erie and Western Railroad, now part of the Erie-Lackawanna system.

OPENING PROGRAMME:⁷

Trick Ponies, Joe and Frank, Introduced by.....	Prof. Austin
Clown.....	Frank Christie
Feats of Contortion.....	Albert Meredith
Balancing Trapeze.....	Mons. Austin
Changes on the High Wire.....	Lew Hunting
Riding Dogs, Introduced by.....	Prof. Austin
Clown, with Song.....	Bob Hunting
Slack Wire.....	Mons. Austin
Triple Horizontal Bars.....	Ricardo and Fitz
Clown.....	Bob Hunting
Feats of Egyptian Jugglery.....	Alexandria
Tight Rope, by the Champion.....	El Nino Eddie
Acrobatic Act.....	Ricardo and Fitz
Dog Circus, Introduced by.....	Prof. Austin

BEAVER FALLS, PA. May 2-4 — Pop., 8,000. 14 miles. National Hotel. P. & L. E. R.R.⁸ Fair weather. Good biz. Prof. Lowanda, Magician; Sam Scribber and J. N. Russell visit the Show here.

YOUNGSTOWN, OH. May 6-8 — Pop., 30,000. 40 miles. Commercial Hotel. N.Y., P. & O. R.R.⁹ Hot weather, Good biz. Prof. Anderson at the Bijou, and Floy[d] Crowell at Opera House. This town is infested with a gang of hoodlums which has given it a not very enviable reputation among show people. We have no serious trouble with them.

SHARON, PA. May 9-11 — Pop., 8,000. 14 miles. Carver House. N.Y., P. & O. R.R. Hot weather. Big biz. Late in getting up. 10th — Big wind and rain storm. We escape any damage. The Barnum Show is blown down at Williamsport, Pa. Another gang of hoodlums in this town. A few of them get “fresh” around the cars, which culminates in a “scrap” and they get the worst of it as usual. 12th — Stopped over Sunday in Meadville, en route to Oil City.

⁷ The program provides an indication of the size and scope of the Hunting show. Approximately three dozen performers and helpers made up the circus.

⁸ The “P.&L.E. R.R.” is the Pittsburgh & Lake Erie Railroad.

⁹ The “N.Y., P.&O. R.R.” is the New York, Pennsylvania & Ohio, now part of the Erie-Lackawanna system.

OIL CITY, PA. May 13-15 — Pop., 16,000. 64 miles. Exchange Hotel. N.Y., P. & O. R.R. Fair weather. Big biz. Those of the company who were here last season have a great time showing the uninitiated through Pete Gruber's Museum.¹⁰ "Skip," alias "Red," alias "Zan Zuma," alias Will Walter Craig, etc., with his accustomed energy and zeal, goes all the way through. He "sees snakes," is "shocked," and still he says he didn't drink anything stronger than ginger. Among the collection is a number of dumb bells. Some of these are attached to a battery and if you pick them up you receive a shock. In another room is a grizzly bear and a lot of snakes. Just over the snake cage is a hole cut out of which a large stuffed copperhead will jump onto the unwary victim. It is a great place and worthy of a visit. 15th — Meredith and wife practicing a flying trapeze act. John Fitz, "Fatty" Conyers, Claude Meredith, Jim Beemer, and others of the "gang," who had taken great delight in showing their friends through the museum here have the tables turned on them. They are enticed into the billiard room, and watching the antics of a ring-tail monk, when the proprietor turns the big grizzly bear loose into the room and locks the door. There is a lively scramble to get out of Bruin's reach, and all seem inclined to get up in the world at once — if no higher than a billiard table. "Fatty" is taken with heart disease, but survives the shock. Bruin is evidently well fed. At any rate he doesn't seem inclined to make a meal off the actors, and they all escape without a scratch.

FRANKLIN, PA. May 16-18. Pop. 8,000. 7 miles. U.S. Hotel. N.Y., P. & O. R.R. Fair weather. Big Biz. A baseball craze strikes the Show here and two nines are organized, the Yaps and the Jays. Capt. Beemer of the "Yaps" takes up a collection of 35 cents and buys a ten cent ball and a 25 cent bat, but decides not to get uniforms at present. The first game results in a tie. At night a rough named McDevitt insults several of our ladies, raises a disturbance in the canvas, and threatens to "clean out the Show." 17th — Mr. Hunting swore out a warrant for McDevitt's arrest, and the would be leader of a riot is sentenced to sixty days in jail. Justice Galbraith and Lawyer Guff deserve especial praise for the interest they manifested in the case and the bringing [of] the culprit to a speedy retribution.

10 "Pete Gruber's Museum" apparently was Oil City's local fun house. Such "museums" proved popular at the turn of the century and were often operated in conjunction with "opera houses."

Even a showman can get justice in Franklin. There seems to be a "Hoodo" on the Show to-day. Al Meredith drops his balance pole and almost falls from the rope, Mons. Austin narrowly escapes a fall from the trapeze, and John Fitz sprains his ankle.

MEADVILLE, PA. May 20-22. Pop., 10,000. 36 miles. Central Hotel. N.Y., P. & O. R.R. Rain. Good biz. 19th — Al Meredith, Olivia and Zan Zuma sick today. Mr. Murray and Prof. Austin go to bed before 8 o'clock. I make a note of this because it may not occur again this season. 20th — Al Meredith gets up out of his sick bed and makes the ascension as usual. 21st — A cold, drizzling rain falls all day. First wet pack-up of the season, and we find out who the dry-weather showmen are. A very friendly feeling exists between Prof. Reig's band and the N.W. band of this city. Several of its members play with Prof. Reig's band during our stay here.

JAMESTOWN, N.Y. May 23-25. Pop., 18,000. 68 miles. Hotel Allen. N.Y., P. & O. R.R. Cool weather. Good biz. Most of the band boys live here. Walter L. Main's Circus and the Irwin Bros.' Show have both been here ahead of us this season. Fred Williams' "Birds of a Feather" Co., . . . are at the Opera House for a week's stay in repertoire. It is one of the most evenly balanced companies I have ever seen, and is the strongest Opera House attraction we have ever showed against.

TONAWANDA, N.Y. May 27, 28. Pop., 10,000. 70 miles. R. R. House. N. Y., L. E. & W. R.R. Heavy rains. Big biz. The largest lumber port in the world except one. Side Show paintings blew down. James Henderson, who has had charge of the stock up to date, left us here.

NIAGARA FALLS, N.Y. May 29, 30. Pop., 7,000. 11 miles. Cosmopolitan Hotel. N.Y. L. E. & W.R.R. Cold and rainy. Good biz. The entire company occupy their spare time in seeing sights and such sights there are to be seen here, too. 30th. The big Show gave no evening performance on account of heavy rain, but the Wizard's Annex gave two performances to good business.¹¹ A man who had

11 When Griffin mentions the "big Show," he is referring to the main circus tent. The "Wizard's Annex," however, is the side-show tent. Here the public saw a variety of typical side-show performances; for example, Punch and Judy shows, "curiosities," glassblowing, snake charming, and magic shows.

hired in this town to take Henderson's place on stock, absconds and takes Ed Clark's valise, containing all the clothes Ed had with him except what he had on.

LOCKPORT, N.Y. May 31-June 1. Pop., 18,000. 22 miles. American House. N.Y., L. E. & W.R.R. Cold and rainy. Big biz. Arrived here at 8:30 A.M. in the rain. Only five canvasmen left. We have had so much rain that it is hard to keep workingmen with the Show. The lot is in a terrible condition, and looked almost impossible to get the canvas up on it at all, but everybody goes to work with a will, and we get everything in good shape for an evening performance. 1st — Cleveland's Haverly Minstrels closed their season here, in Hodge Opera House. Mme. Addie's Glass Blowers have been here during the past week. Met my old friend, Sig Navarro, the manager. This town is noted among show people as the headquarters of the great Gargling Oil Liniment.

ATTICA, N.Y. June 3, 4. Pop., 3,000. 62 miles. Wyoming House. N.Y., L. E. & W.R.R. Cold. Fair biz. "Jack" Fitz takes up a collection among the members of the company to reimburse Ed Clark for the clothes stolen from him in Niagara Falls. Mr. Hunting absent in Buffalo on business, and John J. Murray clowns his act to good satisfaction as usual.

BATAVIA, N.Y. June 5, 6. Pop., 9,000. 12 miles. Tibbett's House. N.Y., L. E. & W.R.R. Cold. Fair biz. A heavy wind blew down the Annex. Murray, the "Banner Boy," gets the first advertising banner he has had for a week.¹² The wind blew so hard here it was impossible to make any outside rope ascensions. Mr. Hunting gets a notice from President of the Village warning him not to show on the lot he has engaged on account of its being in close proximity to a school house. As the notice was not received in time for us to secure another lot, we showed on the one originally engaged, and we all maintained our liberty.

LE ROY, NY. June 7, 8. Pop., 3,000. 10 miles. Wiss House. N.Y., L. E. & W.R.R. Rain. Fair biz. Big salt works here.

¹² "Murray, the 'Banner Boy'" likely performed a variety of circus tasks, those odd-jobs that a small lad could handle. Traditionally, the circus sold advertising space (on cloth banners) to local merchants, proceeds from which would be divided between the circus management and the "banner boy."

ROCHESTER, N.Y. June 10-15. Pop., 115,000. 25 miles. Congress Hall Hotel (one of the best of the season). N.Y., L. E. & W.R.R. 10th — The first real circus weather we have had for four weeks. Hundreds of people turned away at the evening performance. 11th — Rain. Big biz. 12th — Fine weather, people turned away as usual. 13th — Fair weather. Hunting comes to the conclusion that his canvas is not big enough. 14th — Fine weather. Still unable to accommodate the crowds. It looks as though we would have to put another middle piece in the Annex even. 15th — Rain. Fair biz. It is a peculiar fact that Saturday is most always the lightest day we have on week stands. James E. Beemer, who has had charge of the candy stands up to date, leaves us for his home in Pittsburg. John Shea, of this city, takes his place. Clifton Marsh also leaves the Show and Joe McFarland takes charge of stock.

En route from Rochester to Avon, we have a narrow escape from destruction. The switchman went to sleep and our train got on the wrong track. An old man who happened by flagged the engineer and we barely had time to back up and get on the proper track when the fast mail thundered by. Will Lind, our 2d violin and alto player, leaves the Show here. He is replaced by Bert Mitchell, of Lockport. Lot, corner E. Main and University Avenue.

AVON, N.Y. June 17. Pop. 1,900. 18 miles. Patte House. N.Y., L. E. & W.R.R. Rain. Fair biz. First one day stand of the season. Prices raised to 20 cent for adults.¹³ Avon Springs only a mile distant.

WAYLAND, N. Y. June 18. Pop., 1,000. 30 miles. Bryant House. N.Y., L. E. & W.R.R. Warm weather. Fair biz.

AVOCA, N.Y. June 19. Pop., 900. 20 miles. Barrett House. N.Y., L. E. & W.R.R. Warm, rain. Bad biz.

BATH, N.Y. June 20. Pop., 5,000. 8 miles. Reed House. N.Y., L. E. & W. R.R. Fair weather. Good biz. We first learn of the death of J. B. Sanders, an old time circus performer, through the old reliable "Clipper."¹⁴

13 The previous adult admission price had been fifteen cents.

14 The "Clipper" is the *New York Clipper*, an entertainment trade journal.

CORNING, N.Y. June 21, 22. Pop., 10,000. 20 miles. St. James Hotel. N.Y., L. E. & W. R.R. Cold rain. Big biz. This is our old Winter Quarters and everybody feels at home. Prof. D. P. Hurlburt, America's Greatest Horseman, and one of the original projectors of this Show, lives here. He and his estimable lady visit the Show several times. "Shorty" Wilson, tattooed boy, in the Annex, made fun of Lew Hunting's marksmanship, and gave him permission to shoot at him with a target rifle, which he does, inflicting a rather painful but not dangerous wound in the right hip.

ELMIRA, N.Y. June 24-29. Pop., 30,000. 18 miles. Buckbee House. N.Y., L. E. & W.R.R. Warm weather. Good biz. Lot, corner Madison Avenue and Market Street. The Irwin Bros.' Show had a terrible time here during the recent floods. They packed up the Show in four feet of water. Zan Zuma, of the Annex, commenced playing drum and cymbals in the band. Thos. Van Astan, late solo euphonium player of the Barnum Show, and Prof. John G. Wagner, solo cornetist, of this city, strengthen our band here. 28th — Our band was presented with a box of fifty beautiful roses by Prof. Wagner and other musical friends in the neighborhood of the Show ground.

ATHENS, PA. July 1, 2. Pop. 4,000. 22 miles. Stimson House. N.Y., L. E. & W.R.R. Rain. Good biz. Sayre only two miles distant. Make parade over there.

WAVERLY, N.Y. July 3, 4. Pop. 5,000. 4 miles. Tioga House. N.Y., L. E. & W. R.R. Warm weather and rain. Good biz. Morning of the 4th the Annex front blew down, broke three poles and tore one banner in two.

OWEGO, N.Y. July 5, 6. Pop., 7,000. 18 miles. Hotel Dugan. N.Y., L. E. & W.R.R. Warm. Good biz.

BINGHAMTON, N.Y. July 8-13. Pop., 30,000. 22 miles. Hotel Crandall. N.Y., L. E. & W. R.R. Very warm. Fair biz. Lot on Stowe's Flats. 10th — John Jas. Murray goes back to Elmira to be made an Elk. 11th — Mr. Hunting went to N.Y. on business. Murray does his talking and singing turn. Frank Christie and Al Meredith alternate in clowning the bars. 12th — Five snakes added to the Annex. About thirty snake eggs in the box. One of the snakes gets out in the crowd and almost causes a panic.

SUSQUEHANNA, PA. July 15, 16. Pop., 8,000. 22 miles. Kittle House. N.Y., L. E. & W. R.R. Warm, rain. Good biz. Lot on Susquehanna River bank. Very wet. Olivia has a new snake railing made here for her snake act.

DEPOSIT, N.Y. July 17. Pop., 2,000. 15 miles. Western House. N.Y., L. E. & W. R.R. Cool weather. Fair biz.

HANCOCK, N.Y. July 18. Pop., 1,800. 20 miles. Hancock House. N.Y., L. E. & W. R.R. Fair biz.

CALICOON [*sic.*], N.Y. July 19. Pop., 1,000. 28 miles. Delaware House. N.Y., L. E. & W. R.R. Rain. Fair biz. A woman who fails to see the alligator in the Annex comes out and makes a "kick." Murray takes her back and points out the object in dispute. She sticks up her nose and says: "Humph, that's nothing but a codfish."

NARROWSBURGH [*sic.*], N.Y. July 20. Pop., 400. 30 miles. Gebhart's Hotel. N.Y., L. E. & W. R.R. Warm. Fair biz. Only put up the round top here. Ricardo and Fitz only put up two bars. A fine 12 ft. python arrives from Frank J. Thompson, N.Y. He is a beauty, but quite savage, and Olivia has a regular rough and tumble fight with him before he is subdued. These one day stands seem like old time wagon show business.

PORT JERVIS, N.Y. July 22-24. Pop., 15,000. 35 miles. Valley House. N.Y., L. E. & W. R.R. Warm. Good biz and four days ahead of pay. As this is a great R. R. town it makes considerable differences in our receipts, as hundreds of people swarm the lot every night, evidently without money.¹⁵

MIDDLETOWN, N.Y. July 25-27. Pop., 12,000. 30 miles. Madison House. N.Y., L. E. & W. R.R. Warm. Big biz. During our first afternoon show the sudden cry of fire almost caused a panic. It proved to be a large lumber and coal yard just alongside our cars. It took the combined efforts of all our men, together with the R.R. employees, to move them out of harm's way. 26th — The performers beat the canvasmen at baseball — score, 10 to 1. 27th Heavy rain. Good biz. Left the canvas up until Sunday morning.

¹⁵ Griffin is saying that a portion of the Port Jervis, New York, population consisted of transients or "hoboes."

PATERSON, N.J. July 29-Aug. 3. Pop., 80,000. 61 miles. McCurdy's boarding house. N.Y., L. E. & W. R.R. Variable weather. Big biz. Lot, on Grand Street, Colt's Hill. One of the toughest towns we have showed in. "Hoodlums" no doubt would rule here, except for the efficient police. 30th — Heavy rain and no night show. Nearly the entire Show visits the Haverly Cleveland Minstrels, at Jacobs' Opera House. "Shorty" Wilson, tattooed boy, leaves the Show here, and goes to his home at Lebanon, Pa. Geo. Hays joins the Show from New Castle, Pa., and goes to work on the Annex.

JERSEY CITY, N.J. Aug. 5-10. Pop., 165,000. 16 miles. Hotel De Hunting.¹⁶ N.Y., L. E. & W. R.R. Variable weather. Biggest week's business of the season up to date. Lot, on Warren Street, near Newark Avenue. Alexandria, juggler, joined the Show for balance of season. Broncho Charlie added to the Annex. 9th — Sig. Cortada, the Cuban circus manager, visits us in search of talent. Walter Bannister, who had charge of Hyatt Frost's Menagerie with this Show in '87, but now in the employ of Frank J. Thompson, the New York animal importer, shakes hands with his many friends, and sees the Curriculum for the first time in two years. Judge John W. O'Brien, and the entire organization bearing his name, pay their compliments to Mr. Hunting in a body; a very flattering demonstration, including fireworks and appropriate speeches. The Judge and Mr. Hunting are great friends. Everybody spends their spare time in N.Y. and Coney Island. Frank Smith takes charge of the train.

NEWARK, N.J., Aug. 12-17. Pop., 160,000. 9 miles. Wambold's Boarding House. Penn[sylvania] R.R. Hot. Biggest week's biz of the season up to date. It didn't seem possible that we could do more business in a week than we did in J[ersey] C[ity]. But we did it here. Turned people away every night but one, when it rained. Shortly after our arrival here, 12, a couple of roughs walked into the sleeping car and "want to know where the girls are." They are put out with some difficulty, when they go up to No. 2 car, where the workingmen were. They get "fresh" again, and stir up a hornet's nest. One is captured, but the other escapes. Capt. McGlory, after giving the prisoner some

¹⁶ Circus company performers usually ate their meals in local hotels or boardinghouses. However, when this proved inconvenient or too expensive, they dined in their own kitchen tent — "Hotel De Hunting." See also Griffin's entry for Rahway, N. J.

good advice, locks him up for 10 days. Several roughs attempt to raise disturbances around the show, but the efficient police affords us ample protection.

ELIZABETH, N.J., Aug. 19, 20 — Pop. 20,000. 4 miles. Fink's San Souci Hotel. P. R.R. Warm. Big biz. 19th — Hundreds of people turned away. Had a lively set-to here last season with the King & Franklin Show.

RAHWAY, N.J. Aug. 21, 22. Pop., 8,000. 7 miles. Hotel De Hunting. P. R.R. Warm. Fair biz. 22nd — Mr. Hunting goes ahead to New Brunswick. A great game of ball today between the performers and the band. Score, 18 to 2, in favor of the Spangles. The band plays better music than ball. Another "monopolistic" landlord causes the entire company to eat at the cook tent during our stay here. We have a first class cook tent and are therefore very independent. When a landlord wants the "earth," or fails to treat our company as becoming ladies and gentlemen, they all make a quiet sneak to the Hotel De Hunting.

NEW BRUNSWICK, N.J., Aug. 23, 24. Pop., 10,000. 12 miles. White Hall Hotel. P. R.R. Cold and rainy weather. Good biz. On account of the exorbitant license fee demanded by the city authorities we showed across the river in Highland Park, which is out of the city limits, without a license. Some of the citizens there get up a remonstrance, but it amounts to nothing. Our big 60 feet flat car was damaged by the R.R. Co. [Pennsylvania] here, and they gave us two ordinary flats to take its place while our car is taken to the shop for repairs. 24th — The performers and workingmen play a game of baseball. Score, 9 to 3, in favor of the performers. Umpire, Dave Dunkle. Scorer, Lew Hunting.

TRENTON, N.J., Aug. 26-29. Pop., 85,000. 28 miles. Hotel Clinton. P. R.R. Fair weather. Good business. Lot, cor. Clinton Street and R.R. Avenue. Mrs. Florence Murray left us here for her home in Cincinnati. If there is any truth in the maxim that "Coming events cast their shadows before," there will be three in the sketch next season. 27th — Another game of ball today. Side Show vs. Dressing Room. Score, 24 to 19, in favor of Dressing Room. The lot is very small for us, the Side Show canvas being in the back yard of the Hotel

Clinton. I met many old friends among the newspaper fraternity here, notably the Breese Bros. of *The Emporium*, Mr. Fitzgeorge of *The Times*, Mr. Buchanan of *The State Gazette*, and the Naar Bros. of *The True American*. Miss Mable Enright is added to the Concert. Billie West, Barney Fagan, et al., of Primrose & West's Minstrels, paid the Show a visit here.

BRISTOL, PA. Aug. 30, 31. Pop., 8,000. 11 miles. Delaware House. P.R.R. Hot weather. Bad biz.

COATESVILLE, PA. Sept. 2, 3 — Pop., 4,000. 60 miles. P.R.R. Fair weather. Fair biz. This run of 60 miles was made in 2 hours and 45 minutes, and engines changed in Philadelphia.

LANCASTER, PA. Sept. 4-7. Pop., 25,000. 36 miles. P.R.R. Rain. Fair biz. Geo. Hayes, the worthy door tender of the Annex, takes the place of Frank Conyers (resigned) in advance. 5th — Webster-Brady "She" Co., at Proctor's Opera House. Through the courtesy of manager C. L. Durban, several members of our company see the play.

COLUMBIA, PA. Sept. 9, 10. Pop., 10,000. 12 miles. Hotel Wagner. P.R.R. Fair weather. Good biz. Frank Connery resigns, and goes to his home in New Castle. John Shea left us here to accept a position with "Hank" Johnson. Lew Hunting takes charge of the candy stands with Willie Beake as assistant. 10th — No night show, on account of heavy wind and rain storm.

YORK, PA. Sept. 11-14. Pop., 25,000. 15 miles. Penn Hotel. P.R.R. Rain and wind. Fair biz. Rain.

HARRISBURG, PA. Sept. 16-19. Pop., 65,000. 25 miles. Franklin House. P.R.R. Rain, Rain, Rain, Rain! Good biz. The irrepressible Jones of *The Call*, greets his many friends with the Show.

STEELTON, PA. Sept. 20, 21. Pop., 9,000. 3 miles. Hotel De Hunting, P.R.R.

. . . .¹⁷

PITTSBURG, PA. (East Liberty), Oct. 7-9.

The Show closes a prosperous season of 24 weeks here, and ships by rail to winter quarters, in New Castle, Pa., where it [will] open season again early in April 1890. Mr. Hunting and his family Winter at their home in New Castle. Mack Evans, our gentlemanly agent will be business manager of Prof. Chas. E. Griffin's Bohemian Glass Blowers and Wizard's Novelty Annex, which takes the road about the 1st of Nov. Mme. Olivia, Zan Zuma, Geo. Hays and your humble servant, [Charles Eldridge Griffin] will also be with the above company. Hayes Evans goes to his home in Oil City, Pa. Prof. Reig goes to Warren, Pa. Prof. Fred, Leo and Herman Barth, the Vine Bros. and Sim Wheelhouse go to Jamestown, N.Y. Burt Mitchell to Lockport, N.Y. Prof. Austin and wife, after a short vacation, will play "dates." Prof. Albert Meredith, Mrs. Maggie Meredith and Claude Meredith, will spend their Winter vacation in Wheeling, W. Va. Ricardo and Fitz make a tour of the principal cities, opening in Buffalo, N.Y., Nov. 4. The Christie Bros., at the head of a Minstrel troupe bearing their name, open at the Harlem Museum, N.Y. City, Oct. 21. Alexandria resumes his "Tour de Varieties," in Chicago. El Nino Eddie goes to his home in Boston, Mass. John J. Murray joins his wife, Florence, in Cincinnati. They resume work early in the new year. Mabel Enright goes to her home in Newark, N.J. James Wilson, our efficient master of canvas, will rest in Lebanon, Pa. Ed Clarke says he will be "in the soup," but he may be teaching school in Sicily. Jas. Bigler (Jo-Jo), will be a "cabby" in Elmira during the cold Winter months. Frank Smith goes to Baltimore, where he will ship as steward on a Liverpool steamer. Harry Smith (Kinzie, the three mile boy), says he has a "soft" job for the Winter, but won't give it away. Maybe it is "carry-

17 At this point in his diary, Griffin notes only the towns and dates of the circus's stands from Steelton, Pa. on Sept. 20-21 to Pittsburgh on Oct. 7-9. The show played Lewistown on Sept. 23; Huntingdon, Sept. 24;

Tyrone, Sept. 25; Gallitzin, Sept. 26; South Fork, Sept. 27; Derry Station, Sept. 28; Latrobe, Sept. 30; Greensburg, Oct. 1-2; Gennett, Oct. 3; and Braddock on Oct. 4-5, 1889.

ing the basket." "Buck" Murphy, Chas. Miller and Chas. Page, go South for the Winter. Will Schaefnocker and Willie Beake go to New Castle, Pa. Paddy Killick goes to Rochester, N.Y., and John Swords (the cow puncher), goes to London with the "Greatest Show on Earth." Thus we part — some here, some there — like the breaking up of a large family.



CHARLES ELDRIDGE GRIFFIN,

The Comic Yankee Conjuror.

Who for four years pleased and perplexed the Royalty and Peasantry of Europe.

Re-engaged for Season of 1907 as Manager
of Privileges with Buffalo Bill's Wild West.

Looking Backward

1875 to 1880 Country
School Houses, Town
Halls and County Fairs with
my own one man valise troupe;
1881-2 magician and lecturer with
Hilliard & Demott's Circus; 1883
gen'l mgr. Paris Pavilion Shows;
1884 mgr. side show Pullman & Mack's
Circus; 1885 lecturer in side show and
featured in concert (Fire Act) with Sells Bros.
Circus; 1886 to 1897 twelve consecutive seasons
owner and manager of privileges with "Bob"
Hunting's New York Circus; 1898 owner and manager
side show with Frank A. Robbin's Circus; 1899 to 1902
lecturer and stage manager Ringling Bros.' Side Show; 1903
went to England with Buffalo Bill's Wild West as lecturer and
magician (under Lew Graham); Winter 1903-1904 at Bostock's
Hippodrome, Paris; 1904-1905-1906 manager of privileges with
Buffalo Bill's Wild West in Europe; Winter 1904-5 Music Halls of
Great Britain and Waverly Market Carnival, Edinboro, under Sir H. E. Moss.

Dear Bro -
5/19
Glad to get your telegram yesterday
no doubt I have been looking to see if
do you really think there is much
hope for this? I am very sure if they
decide an operation will be necessary
could you guess off hand from the
letter sent that I had started
my head case? It sure is
long me for home. I was
found the by glass mail
found me. I was sent me
about fifty years ago.
I was about for years
and I think any time
I remember how happy
I was to get it.
Hope you and Rob
keep well. We are
all about as
usual. I am
much better. I am
improved so
while we are
in England
you can
see -
Bro -
116
1.

Permanent address

are Buffalo Bill's Wild West, Bailey Building, 27 East 72d Street, New York City

Combined biographical sketch and note to his brother from Charles E. Griffin.