

Only Big Show Coming/ Volume I, 1853 - 1878 By Orin Copple King

Page 434 The Only Big Show Coming

**Maginley** and Carroll's Great Legitimate Circus played Topeka, Monday, June 1, 1868. The advertisements showed two days for Topeka, June 1 and 2, but should have been limited to June 1 only, for on Tuesday, June 2, the show exhibited in Lawrence.

Ben **Maginley** was experimenting with railroad travel and General Agent A. W. Morgan advertised "NO JADED HORSES AND WEARIED TRAVEL-WORN PERFORMERS," but in Topeka no mention was made of rail movement.

The *Kansas Daily Tribune*, Lawrence, reported May 22, that, "Flaming show bills announced yesterday that **Maginley** & Carroll's famous railroad circus will be here to exhibit, for one day only, on Tuesday, the 2d day of June."

On June 2, the *Tribune* announced that, "**Maginley** & Carroll's circus will be in on the 11:30 train, and will have their big tent pitched ready to open their afternoon exhibition, at 2 p. m." The phrase "will be in on the 11:30 train" indicates a show operating out of box or baggage cars and not of sufficient size to require a train entirely its own.

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The Golden Age of the Circus began in 1872 with the revolutionary aggregation assembled by P. T. Barnum, W. C. Coup and Dan Castello. The most astounding feature of the organization was a practical method of railroad transportation. Many showmen had experimented with rail movements—Spalding & Rogers, Maginley & Carroll, Dan Castello, Lent and others, but none had solved the problems peculiar to railroad transportation.

Coup and Castello in 1871 had managed a huge wagon show under Barnum's name. The hardships of overland transportation and the distances between profitable towns chafed the entrepreneurs. Too many towns too small to support a large circus had to be played due to a limit of 20 to 30 miles travel for a horse pow-

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DECNUANA, AFRICA. *Hippopotragus niger*.

“See M’lle Dockrill, the acknowledged Champion Female Principal Hurdle and Four-Horse Rider of the world.”

“See Masters Willie and Freddie, the Boy Wonders, in their incomparable act upon the flying trapeze.”

“See Ben Maginley, the Gentleman, the Scholar, the Reader, the Clown.”

“See M’lle Jutau, the beautiful blonde Gymnast, in her terrific ‘Leap for Life.’”

There is no confirmation that the Parsons date was fulfilled for there is no mention in the local press after show day.

Following the exhibitions at Ft. Scott on Tuesday, May 2, the

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