

## Big Top Oral History Project

### Interview Log

LOC Filename:           afc2012003\_00241\_ms02  
Interviewee:           David Rawls  
Interview Date:         June 15, 2011

#### **Minute Mark   Topics presented in order of discussion on recording**

00:00:00	Introduction
00:00:25	Place of birth
00:00:48	Early schooling, elementary
00:01:21	Moved to Hugo, Oklahoma in 1955
00:01:39	Learning circus acts, Cowboy/Western focus
00:02:32	Performed at early age
00:02:54	Siblings
00:03:57	Traveled with other circuses as a youth, family performed
00:05:04	Interested in logistics, operations, industry
00:05:24	Circus heroes, Floyd King
00:06:17	Circus heroes, Miller Family
00:06:51	Nickname, Mr. Circus
00:07:34	Gravitated toward concessions
00:08:23	Became concession manager at age twenty-five on Clyde Beatty-Cole Brothers
00:09:28	Father grown in stature and respect in industry as a manager
00:10:32	Dream of having own circus
00:10:58	Great American Chautauqua, 1970s
00:13:12	Went to work for D.R. Miller and ran concessions
00:13:23	Relationship with D.R. Miller
00:13:59	Took out own circus in 1984, Kelly Miller
00:14:14	Ran Kelly Miller for twenty-five years
00:14:46	1950s, tough time for American circuses
00:15:03	On television and impact
00:17:20	Goals for Kelly Miller
00:17:34	Lessons from Disney World
00:18:24	Rules for circus employees
00:19:14	Personal contact with public
00:19:52	Built route/territory
00:20:28	Determining circus routes, average daily mileage
00:21:32	Setup/teardown timing
00:21:47	Show timing
00:22:11	Going north in the summer
00:22:36	Work way up in the spring, back in fall
00:22:40	Favorite territories, Michigan
00:23:20	Keeping prices within range
00:23:34	On why we will always have a circus
00:24:45	On Cirque du Soleil
00:25:07	Circus target audience
00:25:16	Carnival geared toward young adult
00:25:51	Finding acts each year

00:26:40 Inquires from all over the world for performers  
00:27:19 Providing accredited school on circus  
00:27:52 Relationship between circus and community, schooling  
00:28:43 Lessons in commissary  
00:29:27 School field trips  
00:29:47 School helped attract employees  
00:30:01 Teacher rotation  
00:31:39 Television as detriment to country  
00:33:32 Animals on circus  
00:33:48 Animals as huge attraction  
00:33:59 Tour group visiting Endangered Arc facility, learning  
00:35:40 Vegans, activists  
00:36:49 Training and care of animals  
00:37:24 Successful elephant births  
00:37:53 On breeding elephants  
00:39:52 Overcoming negatives  
00:40:21 Must-have animals on the circus  
00:40:53 Background on elephants in circuses  
00:41:14 Circuses historically depended on horses  
00:42:01 Transition to elephants in circus  
00:42:29 Parading to circus lot  
00:43:36 10 o'clock call  
00:44:18 Ringling Show in its heyday  
00:44:38 Hitler spying on Ringling Show  
00:45:42 Employee numbers on Kelly Miller  
00:46:03 Hiring local help  
00:46:11 Dealing with drugs, alcohol  
00:46:56 Hiring help from Mexico  
00:47:03 H2B Visas  
00:47:22 Puebla, Mexico  
00:48:02 Difficulties obtaining visas  
00:49:47 Importance of speaking their language  
00:50:05 Job duties of Mexico employees  
00:50:39 Circus as little town  
00:51:06 Purchasing supplies on the road  
00:52:03 Sunday payday  
00:52:54 24-hour man  
00:53:21 Many logistics involved in the circus  
00:54:29 Inspections  
00:56:22 Insurance  
00:57:42 Health insurance for employees  
00:58:34 Routes and other circus competition  
01:00:37 City people versus rural people  
01:01:54 Crossroad states  
01:05:18 Historical routing of shows, following harvests  
01:07:05 Tourist season in Michigan  
01:09:58 Optimal size lot for Kelly Miller  
01:10:41 Typical day for an owner on the lot

01:19:24	Role during the performance
01:21:18	Most important job on the circus
01:23:28	Personal life issues
01:24:31	Off-season work, evaluation
01:26:41	Vacations
01:27:35	Successful years on Kelly Miller
01:28:24	On deciding to get out of the business
01:28:34	Government regulations
01:29:37	Work visas
01:34:01	Education
01:37:07	Children started running Kelly Miller show
01:38:13	On selling Kelly Miller show
01:39:56	Location of Kelly Miller winter quarters
01:40:13	On Hugo, Oklahoma
01:41:37	Life after selling Kelly Miller show
01:42:14	Worked as City Manager
01:43:37	Running a city versus running a circus
01:46:28	Working as a consultant on Carson & Barnes Circus
01:46:55	Miss most about being on the road
01:48:36	Favorite venues/locations
01:50:04	Snow on a tent
01:50:46	Favorite memories, triple summersault
01:51:27	Favorite memories, watching brother perform
01:51:49	Favorite memories, father ascending to management
01:52:44	Relationship with D.R. Miller
01:54:13	On D.R. Miller's funeral
01:55:11	End of interview