

Big Top Oral History Project

Interview Log

LOC Filename: afc2012003_00283_ms02
Interviewee: Barbara Byrd
Interview Date: November 19, 2011

Minute Mark Topics presented in order of discussion on recording

00:00:00	Introduction
00:00:33	Place of birth
00:01:00	Mother's background (Isla Miller)
00:01:49	Father's background (D.R. Miller)
00:02:42	Dog and pony show beginnings
00:03:54	Father's older brother, Kelly
00:04:14	Tight fist with money
00:04:29	Mother, education
00:04:56	How parent's met
00:05:10	Parent's wedding
00:05:42	Mother's first night on circus
00:06:53	How the family came to Hugo, Oklahoma
00:07:55	Promise of free water for life
00:08:13	Parent's living conditions in Hugo
00:08:56	Poor farm property
00:09:13	Parent's bought farm land
00:09:45	Open arms in Hugo
00:10:28	On moving winter quarters to Texas
00:11:42	Earliest circus memory
00:11:55	Spec
00:12:20	Swinging ladder
00:13:00	Circus as playground for a child
00:13:34	On raising children in the circus
00:14:13	Having roots in Hugo
00:15:01	Sense of having a home in Hugo
00:15:48	Education in Hugo
00:17:09	On being the owner's daughter
00:17:42	Acts performed
00:18:06	Practice
00:19:17	Move to concession department
00:19:23	Move to office
00:19:38	Memories of collecting tickets with Grandfather Obert Miller
00:20:08	Working in the cookhouse
00:21:03	Done everything in the circus
00:21:32	Graduated from University of Oklahoma
00:21:49	Met husband, Geary at University of Oklahoma
00:22:41	On joining the circus with husband
00:24:25	Raising children
00:25:20	Making costumes in basement
00:26:23	Different themes every year

00:26:48 Costume repairs on the road
00:27:32 Condensed down to one-ring circus
00:28:09 Five ring to three rings
00:28:45 On what her father would think about condensing circus
00:30:04 History of Al G. Kelly & Miller Brothers Circus
00:31:59 Jack Moore and Carson and Barnes Circus beginnings
00:32:43 David Rawls and Kelly Miller Circus
00:33:43 John Ringling North II purchase of Kelly Miller Circus
00:34:15 Millers on Carson & Barnes
00:34:35 Carson & Barnes Circus sold to D.R. Miller
00:36:08 Media use of term circus in a negative light
00:38:01 Father's love for elephants
00:39:55 Father's estate left to the elephants
00:40:00 Endangered Arc Foundation
00:40:56 Second largest gene pool of Asian elephants in U.S.
00:41:20 Naming of elephants
00:42:40 Oldest elephants
00:43:23 Elephants traveling on the road
00:43:16 On elephants as performers
00:44:10 Longevity of elephants
00:45:58 Father's death in McCook, Nebraska
00:47:37 Father's first circus in McCook, Nebraska
00:48:43 Father's life coming full-circle
00:49:01 Funeral planning
00:50:32 Littleton, Colorado service in tent
00:51:49 Cold storage of father
00:52:12 Hugo, Oklahoma service
00:53:48 Circus parade to cemetery
00:56:02 Mother as rock in family
00:56:36 Father's advice to Barbara
00:57:36 Showmen's Rest at Mount Olivet Cemetery history
01:03:38 Kelly Miller home
01:04:26 Moved into home at age 14
01:04:52 Importance of home
01:06:04 Family businesses started as result of circus
01:06:33 Development of the spool
01:07:39 Development of stake driver
01:09:31 Development of giraffe truck
01:09:45 Building of elephant trucks
01:10:06 Development of seat wagons
01:11:24 Use of airplanes for advertising
01:11:58 Circus music, history and changes
01:15:26 Canned music
01:16:40 Performing as an art
01:18:05 Performers as multi-generational
01:19:20 Evolving performance routines
01:19:49 Circus like a football team
01:21:05 Not just a circus, but many different businesses put together

01:23:16	Circus setup / organization
01:24:09	24 hour man
01:24:56	Tent setup
01:25:28	Outside forces at work on the lot
01:26:09	Barbara's role during show
01:29:10	Miller family roles on circus
01:30:41	Enjoyment of family working for circus
01:31:32	School on the circus
01:33:21	Circus as a true melting pot
01:33:56	Hard work
01:34:32	Favorite part of circus
01:35:34	Favorite locations, venues
01:37:42	Routing the circus
01:39:28	Lot size
01:40:06	Lot locations
01:40:59	Setting up in buildings
01:41:47	Challenges as a circus owner today
01:43:14	Government regulations impact
01:43:43	Visas
01:45:58	Future of circus
01:49:10	Future of Carson & Barnes Circus
01:50:32	Hugo, Oklahoma as home
01:51:36	Father's attempted move of winterquarters to Mississippi
01:54:10	Reflections on parents
01:56:04	Not about the money, but tradition
01:57:06	Circus ship
01:57:36	Family stories
01:59:10	Positive influence on circus world
01:59:18	Seventy-five years of continuous circus ownership
02:00:13	End of interview