

Big Top Oral History Project
Interview Log

LOC Filename: afc2012003_00289_ms02
Interviewee: Mike Fulton
Interview Date: August 12, 2011

Minute Mark Topics presented in order of discussion on recording

00:00:00	Introduction
00:00:25	Place of birth
00:00:57	Parent's background
00:02:06	Mother's name, birthplace
00:02:19	Mother's family, farmers
00:03:04	Mother joined circus in 1940s
00:03:50	Mother worked making costumes
00:04:22	Father was an orphan at Goodland
00:04:36	Father ran away at age thirteen and joined circus
00:05:24	Family inherited circus business
00:05:31	On Isla Miller, Mike's great aunt
00:07:45	Women took show over during war years
00:08:03	Isla as pearl necklace
00:08:34	Father's occupation in the circus
00:08:51	Blow the show
00:11:16	Mike's jobs on the show
00:11:28	Learning how to drive a truck
00:12:06	Learn by watching
00:12:26	Earliest circus memory
00:12:48	Riding with D.R. in an airplane
00:13:29	Elephant running off in corn field
00:14:09	Circus boat show
00:16:58	Going through port hole to open engine room
00:18:05	Circus ship sinks
00:19:47	Other jobs performed on the circus
00:21:09	Smell-o-roma
00:21:33	Mom in charge of concessions on Carson & Barnes
00:22:29	Mike on working behind the scenes
00:22:46	Uncrating fifty baby elephants
00:24:13	Elephants named after family members
00:24:44	Living arrangements in Hugo, Oklahoma
00:25:58	Working on the big top, tent
00:26:58	Process of setting up the tent
00:28:52	Setting up the seats with the elephants
00:29:40	Distributing water
00:33:05	Hippo tank
00:33:43	Manure
00:34:24	Impressions left from circus on grounds
00:35:37	Rolling, folding tent just right
00:36:39	Being pulled out of mud by elephants

00:37:44 What Mike doesn't miss about circus life
00:38:42 From circus to railroad business, similarities
00:39:14 Barbara the elephant, relationship with
00:40:20 Working for other circuses, outside of Carson & Barnes
00:41:16 Total years working for circus
00:41:37 Decision on circus retirement
00:42:32 Changes within the circus
00:43:27 Gas rigs to diesel truck
00:44:03 Truck painting
00:45:46 Living quarters growing up
00:46:45 Modern Trailer Park
00:48:23 Schooling in Kansas
00:49:50 Mike's children
00:50:21 Favorite venue/city
00:53:33 Favorite state
00:54:40 Differences between towns
00:55:17 Watering the tent down
00:55:52 Mud as a challenge
00:57:38 Circus music, changes
00:58:06 Pee Wee Herman
00:58:40 Getting sick on the road
00:59:41 Contract, pay scale
01:00:02 Doing extra as family member
01:00:29 Parking trucks
01:01:21 Blowing the arrows
01:02:19 Most important trucks
01:04:31 Mileage traveled per year
01:04:54 Dealing with snow
01:06:03 Repairing the canvas tent, baseball stitches
01:07:40 Repairing vinyl tents
01:08:23 Wet tents
01:09:01 Longevity of big top
01:09:30 Dealing with health inspectors and fire marshals
01:10:53 Death of D.R. Miller
01:11:36 Mike's siblings and circus involvement
01:13:10 Current job, electrician
01:14:07 Doing it all over again
01:14:37 Children's smiles
01:15:02 On entertaining children and adults
01:15:48 Expectations, unknowns on the road
01:17:12 Taking time to rest
01:17:49 Payday
01:18:05 Saving, spending money
01:19:06 Showmen's Club in Hugo, Oklahoma
01:20:04 Returning home to Hugo in winter, swapping stories
01:20:37 Building a museum
01:21:19 Hugo as Circus City USA
01:21:50 Endangered Arc

01:23:16	Showmen's Rest
01:23:37	Last circus attended
01:24:15	Working out the kinks
01:24:56	Favorite part as a spectator, elephants
01:25:31	Barbara the elephant, favorite
01:25:55	Smells of the circus
01:27:02	Soccer teams, playing
01:28:01	Softball
01:30:09	Balancing work with play
01:31:06	D.R.'s funeral in Hugo, Oklahoma
01:33:09	Dog and pony show
01:33:37	Mom retired from circus in the 1990s
01:34:07	Sewing costumes
01:34:56	Playing in the basement of the Big House
01:35:23	Silver Dollar Bar
01:35:52	Shooting gallery
01:37:34	Continuing to call Hugo, Oklahoma home
01:39:35	Capturing loose animals
01:39:44	Capturing eight baby elephants on the run – Winslow, Arizona
01:42:36	Barbara the elephant spooked, ran through nursing home and cornfield – Wisconsin
01:45:23	Loose tiger on run in north Pennsylvania
01:47:22	Barbara the elephant spooked by train
01:48:37	Capturing tiger on the loose at Hugo Lake
01:51:22	Elephants on the loose in Sallisaw, Oklahoma
01:52:59	Darts
01:53:19	Picking up animals at zoos
01:55:00	End of interview